WHO WILL WIN THE RAW POWER STRUGGLE?

PRO WRESTLING ILLUSTRATED

PRO Wrestling® ILLUSTRATED

www.pwi-online.com

Not The PWI 500, But The ...

PWI Female 50

NOVEMBER 2008
$8.95
Display Until Oct. 21
0 09128 00388 7

WIN A REAL BELT!

Dream up your very own professional wrestler and manage his career. Compete for the World Title every three weeks and win a championship belt, engraved plaque, or other prizes!

Don't get scammed by imitators that will take your money and run — the IWA created play-by-mail wrestling in 1985 and has been going strong ever since. Our prizes are better, our service is better, and our prices are even **lower** than when we started!

No one has the competition we do. Choose from over 8,000 opponents in more than 60 leagues, managed by people from all over the world. Those managers have included movie stars and professional wrestlers, like everyone's favorite superhero, **Shane "Hurricane" Helms!**

Use this coupon to create your imaginary wrestler. Send it with $3 for your first ten matches to:

IWA CHALLENGE
BOX 5275
WILLOWICK, OH 44095

Copyright © 2004 Worlds Unlimited, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

WEAR-DOWN HOLDS

1. Airplane spin
2. Arm drag
3. Arm lock
4. Asian spike
5. Atomic drop
6. Bear hug
7. Bite
8. Body slam
9. Body tackle
10. Bulldog
11. Chicken wing
12. Choke slam
13. Claw
14. Clothesline
15. Cross body block
16. Double axehandle
17. Drop kick
18. Eagle split
19. Elbow smash
20. Eye gouge
21. Face rake
22. Fireman's carry ram
23. Flying body press
24. Flying clothesline
25. Flying drop kick
26. Flying elbow drop
27. Flying head butt
28. Flying mare
29. Forearm smash
30. Foreign object
31. Full nelson
32. Giant swing
33. Grapevine
34. Hair pull
35. Hammer lock
36. Head lock
37. Head stomp
38. Hip roll
39. Irish whip
40. Knee drop
41. Leg lock
42. Leg sweep
43. Manager interference
44. Monkey flip
45. Overhead toss
46. Pole ram
47. Reverse chin lock
48. Rolling scissors
49. Rope burn
50. Russian sickle
51. Savate kick
52. Scissors grip
53. Shoulder breaker
54. Slingshot
55. Snap mare
56. Step-over toe hold
57. Suplex
58. Surfboard
59. Turnbuckle smash
60. Wrist lock

SET-UP HOLDS

61. Abdominal stretch
62. Avalanche
63. Backbreaker
64. Backroll press
65. Belly to belly
66. Big splash
67. Boston crab
68. Brain buster
69. Camel clutch
70. Cobra clutch
71. Cradle
72. Crucifix
73. DDT
74. Figure four
75. Flying leg drop
76. Gourd buster
77. Hurricanrana
78. Moonsault
79. Neckbreaker
80. Piledriver
81. Power bomb
82. Power slam
83. Scorpion deathlock
84. Sleeper
85. Slingshot suplex
86. Spine buster
87. Stunner
88. Sunset flip
89. Superplex
90. Texas cloverleaf

YOUR NAME (PRINT NEATLY)

STREET ADDRESS

CITY, STATE, ZIP CODE

WRESTLER'S NAME (DO NOT USE ANY REAL PRO WRESTLER NAMES)

WEAR-DOWN HOLDS: *Choose 10 of the holds at the left numbered 1-60. Only use a hold once.*

1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____

6 _____ 7 _____ 8 _____ 9 _____ 10 _____

SET-UP HOLDS: *Choose 5 of the holds at the left numbered 61-90. Only use a hold once.*

1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____

FINISHING HOLD: *Create your own custom final maneuver or choose a hold from our list.*

from the desk of...

THERE WAS A time when wrestling magazine publishers would produce special *Women Of Wrestling* issues to give their predominantly male audience a chance to ogle scantily clad female wrestlers, valets, and managers in print. These publishers would usually try to present the issues in a manner that offered some journalistic relevance, but we knew what they were all about: sex. It sells.

What the heck. Let's not pretend; we were the publishers. And those *Women Of Wrestling* issues from a few years back were some of the most popular specials we've ever published. (Don't even try to find them in our back issue ads; your only chance is eBay.)

It's actually been four years since our last *Women Of Wrestling* special, which is somewhat inexcusable from a business perspective, but, I feel, quite justifiable nonetheless. Without some semblance of an editorial backdrop for producing such issues, I felt we were exploiting these women, which, of course, made no sense since, for the most part, that's the reason they were in this business to begin with.

That being said, a new era of women's wrestling is solidly upon us, one in which beauty and talent are equally responsible for the success of at least the top 50 women in the sport. Thus, the concept of the "*PWI* Female 50," which we hope will become as much a fixture in the wrestling landscape as the "*PWI* 500" is for the men.

I don't believe it's a coincidence that the "*PWI* Female 50" coincides with WWE's decision to ever-so-subtly alter the content of its TV shows to get reclassified from TV14 to PG. While the degree of violence plays into the rating of a TV show, the sexual content plays an even larger role. Think back to the 1990s. When the WWF saw its TV viewership sliding into dangerously low territory, the "Attitude Era" was born, which meant we were going to see a lot more of Sable's chest than Papa Shango's.

From a business perspective, it can be argued that the "Attitude Era" saved the company, and it probably wouldn't be a stretch to say it saved the entire business. The problem with "shock TV," as has been stated on this page so many times, is that once someone is shocked, they eventually become numb, and in order to get a reaction from them, you have to turn up the juice. At some point, even a man like Vince McMahon, who, if he sat in my seat would have no qualms about publishing *Women Of Wrestling* on a monthly basis, has to realize that the shock inflation has to have an ending point. After a while, the women of WWE, long on beauty and short on talent, became interchangeable body parts.

But then came Trish Stratus, and she proved that, with the right teacher (Fit Finlay) and by mixing hard work, guts, and natural athletic ability, one can evolve from a barking dog to an extremely competent wrestler in a relatively short period of time. Trish set the bar high for today's Divas and Knockouts whose bodies and faces got them inside the door, but whose talent made it unnecessary to decorate the rings with women whose only assets are, well, their assets.

When beautiful women can actually get inside the ring and compete at a world-class level, there is no need for gratuitous sex and WWE can now welcome back the whole family and not have to concern itself with turning the clock back to the dreary early- to mid-'90s.

There also is no longer a need to justify another issue of *Women Of Wrestling*. We now have the "*PWI* Female 50"—and can be proud of it.

Stu Saks
Publisher

Pro Wrestling Illustrated

STANLEY WESTON
Founder
(1919-2002)

PUBLISHER
Stuart M. Saks
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Frank Krewda
CREATIVE DIRECTOR
David Romanosky
CONTRIBUTING DESIGNER
Olivia Sheehan
PRE-PRESS SERVICES
Cliff Campo
Dave Dickey
Bethany Lawler
SENIOR WRITERS
David Lenker
Dan Murphy
Harry Burkett
Brandi Mankiewicz
Frank Inglosi
CONTRIBUTING WRITERS
Al Castle
Matt Brock
Brian Solomon
Tim Drake
Al Alven
Dave Rosenbaum
Xavier Hernandez
Michael Moore
Bill Meltzer
Elizabeth A. Hunter
C.F. Hunter
Brady Hicks
Kevin McElvaney
Gerry Strauss
Stuart Toukon
Louie Dee
CONTRIBUTING ARTIST
Jason Conlan
CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS
George Napolitano
Joe Zanolle
Timothy A. Walker
Koichi Yoshizawa
Dorothy Lee
Robert Payes
Buddy LaMantia
Duane Long
George Tahinos
Mike Lano
Wayne McCarty
Scott Romer
Greg Greenland

GENERAL MANAGER
Arnold C. Joseph
CIRCULATION DIRECTOR
Kenneth J. Gudaitis
CIRCULATION SERVICES
David Tyler
ADVERTISING INQUIRIES
(215) 461-0583
ssaks@sepublications.com
SUBSCRIPTION INQUIRIES
Sports & Entertainment Publications LLC
P.O. Box 529
Mt. Morris, IL 61054-0529
1-800-846-6438
custsrvcsep@sepublications.com

Pro Wrestling Illustrated (ISSN: 1043-7576), Vol. 29, No. 11, 2008, is published monthly, including four special issues, seven double issues, and the PWI Almanac, by Sports and Entertainment Publications, LLC, 6198 Butler Pike, Suite 200, Blue Bell, PA 19422. Periodicals postage paid at Blue Bell, PA 19422, and additional post offices. Postmaster: Send change of address notices to: Pro Wrestling Illustrated, P.O. Box 529, Mt. Morris, IL 61054-0529. Single copy price $8.95 U.S./Canada (£5.25 in U.K.). Subscription price $108.40 in the U.S. ($141.40 in Canada and Mexico, and $196.40 in remaining countries). Not responsible for the loss or non-return of unsolicited articles or photographs, which will not be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed envelope bearing the proper amount of postage.

The entire contents of this magazine are copyright ©2008 Sports and Entertainment Publications, LLC. No part of this magazine may be reproduced without the written permission of the publisher. All rights reserved. Publisher is not responsible for the accuracy or content of any advertisements appearing in this magazine, nor the delivery or quality of merchandise or services offered. No endorsement of any such advertisement is intended or implied. Advertisers and agencies assume liability for claims arising from the content of their advertisements. FOR ADVERTISING INQUIRIES AND RATES: (215) 461-0583. U.S. and Canadian distribution by Kable Distribution Services Inc., 14 Wall Street, Suite 4C, New York, NY 10022. International distribution by Worldwide Media Service Inc., 115 East 23rd St., New York, NY 10005. U.K. distribution by Comag, Tavistock Rd., West Drayton, Middlesex UB77QE, England.

Printed in U.S.A.

Bring It!
Bring It!

November 2008

PRO Wrestling ILLUSTRATED

contents

features

22 **PRESS CONFERENCE: KEVIN NASH**
Like most former champs, Kevin Nash would love to win another major title. But at this point of his career, "Big Sexy" isn't losing any sleep over the fact that Samoa Joe is TNA's current World champion

28 **SHATTERING THE GLASS CEILING: WOMEN'S WRESTLING FINALLY EARNS RESPECT**
Today's brand of women's wrestling is the ultimate combination of beauty and skill. The TNA Knockouts, WWE Divas, and SHIMMER girls may be nice to look at, but they can also excite fans with their wrestling ability

33 **THE FIRST ANNUAL "*PWI* FEMALE 50"**
Finally, there are enough credible female wrestlers out there to warrant a ranking of the top 50. Just as we do with our "*PWI* 500" each year, the staff got together to decide who belongs on this list and where

84 **TRADITION AT A CROSSROADS: WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD FOR THE NEW ROH-NWA ALLIANCE?**
The oldest wrestling organization joined the hottest indy promotion to put on a sizzling card in late-summer. Where do they go from here?

90 **UN-BEER-ABLE! WHY JIM CORNETTE IS DESPERATE TO SKUNK ROODE & STORM**
Beer Money Inc. is running roughshod over TNA, angering competitors and fans ... and Managing Director Jim Cornette. But so far, Cornette has not found a way to keep the new TNA World tag team champions under control

94 **WITH TRIPLE-H ON SMACKDOWN ... WHO WILL TAKE CONTROL OF RAW?**
For years Triple-H was the heart and soul of Raw. But after the draft, he found himself on Smackdown. His departure left a void only one superstar can fill. Which superstar will win the power struggle on Raw?

98 **SHELTON BENJAMIN'S BREAKTHROUGH MATCH ... WELL, NOT SO FAST!**
A U.S. championship reign should be sufficient to silence Shelton Benjamin's critics, but for some fans, Benjamin still has a whole lot left to prove

106 **MARK HENRY: "THE ECW TITLE IS MORE THAN JUST A BELT TO ME"**
The ECW title may not command much respect, but Henry has plenty of reasons to consider his current reign the pinnacle of professional wrestling

departments

3 **FROM THE DESK OF ...**
WWE's for the entire family again

6 **BEFORE THE BELL compiled by Gerry Strauss**
Ric Flair DVD reviewed, "Talkin' Trash," "One To Watch," and more

10 **RINGSIDE with Bill Meltzer**
WWE tinkering with new creative philosophy; Another wave of TNA roster cuts; Action heating up in Puerto Rico

16 **IN FOCUS by Dave Lenker**
Hoping Flair won't follow in Favre's footsteps; Foley's announcing career

18 **OFF THE TOP ROPE with Brandi Mankiewicz**
Our "Queen" takes a peek inside her mailbag

110 **THE BUSINESS PAGE by Harry Burkett**
Major business stories, the latest ratings, and WWE stockwatch

114 **WIN, LOSE, OR DRAW by Harry Burkett**
Derek Frazier redeems himself at this year's Shamrock Cup

116 **THE STRAIGHT SHOOTER by Dan Murphy**
Why don't C.M. Punk and Samoa Joe get any respect?

118 **THE TRADE'S MARK by Frank Ingiosi**
The secret ingredient to TNA's global appeal

120 **12 QUESTIONS WITH ... JOHN McCHESNEY**
It's fabulous being in the big leagues

122 ***WRESTLING OBSERVER* HALL OF FAME**
We pay tribute to Killer Kowalski

126 **INDEPENDENT ROUNDUP by Al Alven**
Recent goings-on at some of the smaller shows

128 **THE INTERNATIONAL REPORT by Bill Meltzer**
News from WWC's Anniversario show, Mistico hits the road; Suwama update

130 **ARENA REPORTS**
Key results from around the world, plus our spotlight card

136 ***PWI* CLASSIC**
How Wendi Richter saved women's wrestling

142 **BETWEEN FALLS**
Shawn Was Right; Da Man, Part Two?; Say It Ain't So, Joe

144 **OFFICIAL WRESTLING RATINGS**
Rankings for Raw, Smackdown, ECW, TNA, ROH, and more!

146 **DRAWING BLOOD**
The odd but entertaining perspective of Jason "Mr. J" Conlan

COVER PHOTOS:
Michelle McCool by John Giamundo/World Wrestling Entertainment, Inc./Courtesy of CW Network
Beth Phoenix by George Napolitano
Angelina Love/Velvet Sky by Lee South/TNA Wrestling
Awesome Kong by Lee South/TNA Wrestling

COVER DESIGN:
Olivia Sheehan

LOOK FOR THE DECEMBER 2008 ISSUE OF *PRO WRESTLING ILLUSTRATED: 5-WAY FACEOFF*, ON SALE OCTOBER 21, 2008

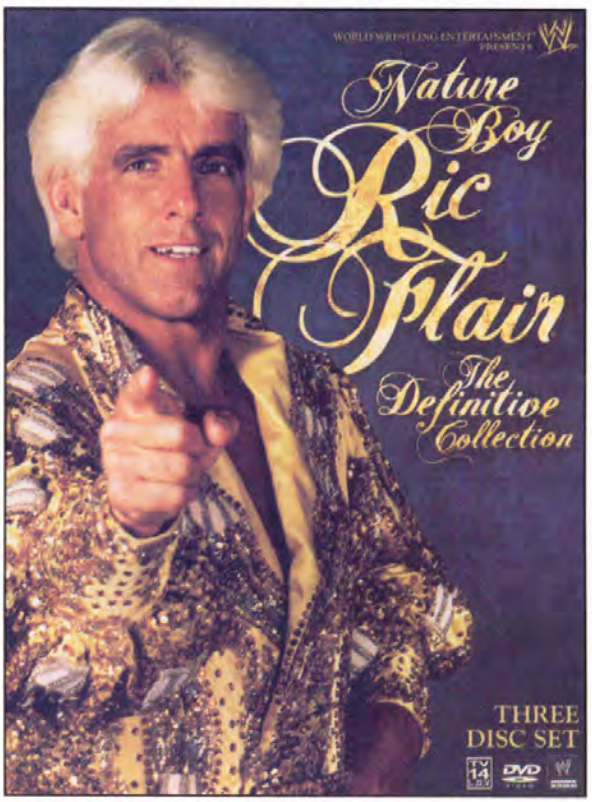
before the bell

Compiled by Gerry Strauss

Ric Flair: A Fitting Tribute

If WWE's *Nature Boy Ric Flair—The Definitive Collection* DVD proves anything, it's that you can't satisfy *all* the people *all* the time.

Online reviews of the disc show that half of the viewers truly appreciate the documentary/tribute to Flair on Disc One of this eight-hour, three-disk set. The other half simply wants another opportunity to watch Flair in action during his prime—to hell with the documentary.



In reality, this collection caters to both sides, featuring a two-hour discourse on the "Nature Boy's" life, from his roots in Minnesota to his unforgettable retirement ceremony on Raw (which is included in its entirety). Disc One also includes bonus scenes in which Flair shares the origin of his many nicknames, captivating promos, and classic feuds.

Throughout the narrative, wrestling legends such as Harley Race, Baron Von Raschke, and the Crocketts augment Flair's first-person recollections with their own memories.

By time the story winds its way to Flair's second WWE tour of duty, the legends are replaced by Flair contemporaries such as Triple-H, Randy Orton, and Edge, all of whom are careful to inject healthy doses of deference to "The Dirtiest Player In The Game."

It's no surprise Flair doesn't quite dish the dirt as much as viewers might hope. After all, the project was a quasi-retirement celebration from Vince McMahon. So any difficulties or disappointments Flair may have experienced during his WWF/WWE runs were presented as being the result of his struggle to survive in a younger man's game.

Yet some parties are not spared. To nobody's surprise, WCW—former heads Jim Herd and Eric Bischoff, in particular—comes off looking poorly. Despite Flair's justified indignation over how the company, including his former stablemate Ole Anderson, treated him between 1993 and 2001, the "Nature Boy" never loses his cool.

At times, the commentary veers away from Flair and into some rather tangential areas. For example, Disc One spends perhaps too much time on The Four Horsemen and what they meant to wrestling. But lifelong Flair fans will surely grin and bear such digressions.

Perhaps the set's only shortcoming is the rather abrupt transition from Disc One to Two. As the first disc climaxes in what is surely one of the most emotional wrestling moments fans have ever seen, Flair's retirement ceremony, Disc Two and Three are a mere collection of Flair's matches. Granted, there are some rare gems here, but viewers are forced to shift gears before their eyes dry.

The choice of starting the disc with a rather dry exchange with Jack Brisco from the Mid-Atlantic days is a curiously strange and deflating choice coming on the heels of such an emotional ending to Disc One.

Viewers may quibble over whether this is the "definitive" Ric Flair collection or not. But one thing is certain: After eight hours of non-stop "Nature Boy," both camps will agree that fatigue has set in. We give *Nature Boy Ric Flair—The Definitive Collection* 3½ suplexes out of five.

—Frank Krewda

Talkin' Trash

Here's a list of the top 10 wrestling-related items you've been talking about lately and our gut reactions to each

10. Randy Orton extends his stay on the injured list for several months following a freak motorcycle crash. And you thought he had anger management issues before?

9. The NWA championship changes hands on the undercard of a Ring of Honor event. At this rate, Bart Gunn might be on standby in case a spot opens up to resurrect the "New" Midnight Express.

8. Mick Foley intonates that he is done with WWE for the time being after having creative differences with Vince McMahon during his brief run as Smackdown's color commentator. We suppose a hardcore legend can get a little ticked off hearing Vinnie Mac calling him a girly-man in his headphones for two hours a week either.

7. Jeff Jarrett's return to the TNA spotlight appears imminent after being teased at Hard Justice. Is this the welcome return of a major player ... or a huge step backward for TNA?

6. Mike Adamle is named the GM of WWE's Raw brand. Let's get this straight: The guy who was hired strictly based on his announcing experience tanks as an announcer, and they give him more authority? Only in WWE.

5. Brock Lesnar wins his first major UFC fight. That was close ... one more loss and we might have seen him wrestling at a bingo hall or VFW.

4. Midway Games releases TNA's first video game. This is a huge step for the TNA brand. Now, if only they could have included Starman from the classic *Pro Wrestling* on the original Nintendo.

3. Todd Grisham is promoted to play-by-play announcer for ECW. After listening to Adamle for two months, Grisham sounds like Gordon Solie.

2. Brooke Hogan poses as a beat-up convict in a photo posted on her MySpace page. At this point, even "The Hulkster" must be getting sick of her shameless attention-seeking ways.

1. Ric Flair ends his relationship with the WWE in order to free himself up to pursue outside bookings. Let's hope "Naitch" can fight the urge to don the tights after retiring with such class and dignity.

The Internet Insider

The following wrestling-related items were culled from various websites ... or were they? See if you can pick out the items that were actually reported on the Internet (which doesn't necessarily mean they're true) and the ones we blatantly made up. The answers appear at the end of this column on Page 9.

1. If you thought The Iron Sheik's rants on YouTube and elsewhere were off the wall, you should have seen his live, two-hour Q&A session at a recent Maryland Championship Wrestling event. Twenty minutes in, after his usual profane tirade, he proceeded to strip down to nothing but his bandana while promising to make the shocked crowd "humble." Amazingly, no charges were filed.

2. Two fans were arrested for assaulting a WWE crew member in the parking lot outside the Nassau Coliseum at The Great American Bash in Long Island, New York. Keith Powell and Timothy Vandewater, both 20 years old, allegedly stole commemorative chairs from the backstage area. Once caught by the WWE staffer in the parking lot, they reportedly became violent, hitting the employee with a bottle, and biting him before the scuffle was broken up.

3. ECW original The Sandman was busted during Capt. Lou Albano's 75th birthday party at the La Lanterna Restaurant in Yonkers, New York. The hardcore icon was caught throwing glasses at several employees, and was eventually hit in the face with a bottle during the melee, courtesy of the restaurant owner. He was subsequently taken to jail for psychiatric evaluation.

4. On the heels of Scott Baio's successful reality show (during which he dealt with being middle-aged and single), VH-1 has approached Hulk Hogan about doing a similar show. Tentatively titled "*Hulk Hogan: What'cha Gonna Do?*, the show would follow "The Hulkster's" quest to forget estranged wife Linda by re-entering the dating scene.

One to Watch

If the ever-popular Ring of Honor promotion represents the pro wrestling of tomorrow, then it only makes sense that one of its top students is heralded as a superstar of the future. Enter Rhett Titus, one of the ROH Training Academy's most promising graduates.

A native of Forked River, New Jersey, Titus was taught by former ROH champions Bryan Danielson and Austin Aries. He has clearly learned his lessons well, competing in more than 50 matches in his rookie year as part of ROH's touring roster. Titus has also wrestled for local promotions such as AWESOME Wrestling and National Wrestling Superstars, strategically placing himself in the ring with different types of opponents and in front of different crowds to accelerate the learning process.

At 6'2", his size and physique make him an immediate standout compared to many of his smaller high-flying peers, and his dropkick is already heralded as one of the best in wrestling today. At only 20 years old, this self-proclaimed heartthrob has entered his third year in the sport, turning heads as he moves up the ROH rankings.

With an impressive showing in Maryland Championship Wrestling's 2008 "Shamrock Cup" tournament, the man who now claims to be "addicted to love" may soon find himself addicted to stardom.

We Heard That!

"Anyone who wears a mask is either incredibly ugly, incredibly stupid, or is the Batman. And you sir, are not the Batman."

—Santino Marella to Rey Mysterio Jr. on Raw

"In the time that you train to become a professional wrestler, you've really got to get rid of your ego as an MMA fighter. You can't sit there and go, 'Wow, this is a guy that I could really slap around right now and snap his neck.' I have to sit there and take it from him and learn from this guy that I could beat up because he knows pro wrestling better than I do. It's tough for a lot of guys to let that ego go and admit, 'I suck, I'm absolutely freaking horrible, I have no idea what I'm doing. Please teach me.'"

—Frank Trigg, speaking about the growing pains in transitioning from MMA to pro wrestling on the *Between The Ropes* radio show

"I got to that age and my financial plan was totally in order, but I still looked at myself, and I looked at the roster, and I still see that I'm one of the top guys on the card, so why retire? Why quit when you still love doing what you do?"

—Booker T explaining his decision not to retire as planned during an interview on the *Between The Ropes* radio show

"There are times you've got to stand up for yourself, and there are times you've got to let things slide. And you have to differentiate on those battles. Some are tests from the veterans

to see if you should be in this business, and I get that. You should be honored to be part of their company. But at the same time, you can't expect that guy to go and get himself over if he's worried about someone backstage stabbing him in the back while they're watching him on the monitor and trying to perform."

—Matt Morgan describing the sensitive environment that comes with working for WWE during an interview on UGO.com

"I looked in the ring and on one side I saw a legend ... a Hall of Famer, Tony Atlas, with the 'World's Strongest Champion,' Mark Henry. And on the other side I saw Tommy Dreamer, a washed-up loser."

—Colin Delaney sharing his reasoning for his recent betrayal of former mentor Tommy Dreamer on ECW TV

caption me!

Think you're a better writer than the editors at PWI? Here's your chance to prove it, punk! This shot of a "dazed" Triple-H looking resplendid in his beer bong headgear screams "caption me!" If you think you are up to the challenge, e-mail your zany quips to prowrestlingillustrated@yahoo.com, or slap a stamp on an envelope and snail-mail it to "Caption Me!," Box 1148, Fort Washington, PA 19034. Three issues from now, we'll share with you the best of the bunch–and the funnier the better!

September's Best

Jim Neidhart: "Now whose the prettiest little princess in all the wrestling world?"

—John Stevenson, Palm Springs, FL

Jim Neidhart: "Bret was right, this fur really does bring out the color in my face."

—Dan Kensington, Dayton, OH

Neidhart: "Do you think Natalya would like this hat?"

—Anthony Berry, thundercuz@yahoo.com

At least now we know what cotton candy would look like if it grew legs.

—Frank Daniels, Cleveland, OH

More fur on his head ... just what Jim Neidhart needs.

—Tyler Smith, Toronto, Canada

Answers to Internet Insider:

Stories 1 and 4 are entirely made up.

ringside

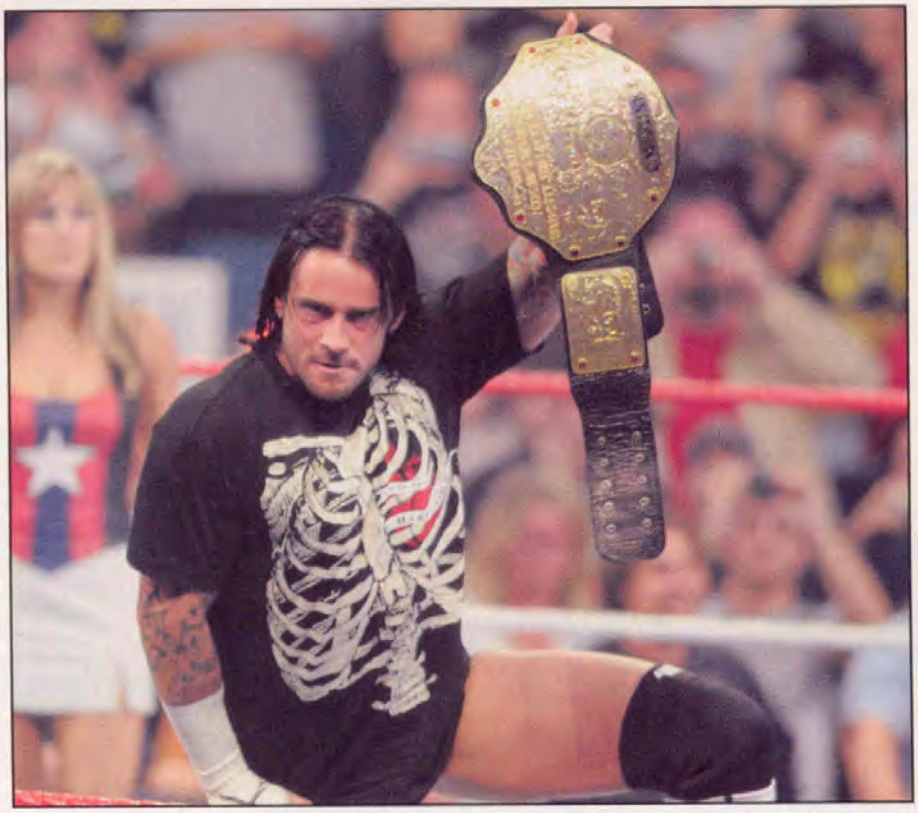
With Bill Meltzer

THE SHOCKING WWE World championship change that saw **C.M. Punk** capture the belt may not be the last time you see a major title change hands on a regular Raw cable broadcast.

Word is that WWE Creative and **Vince McMahon** want to measure the effect of such changes on TV ratings over the weeks following the change. With the CW network dropping Smackdown on Friday nights and Raw ratings suffering on USA, WWE officials felt it was time for a bold experiment.

In another significant change, WWE has successfully lobbied for its program rating to be changed from TV-14 to PG. The on-air effect will be less blood and somewhat tame content, although the WWE pendulum had already been swinging back in that direction prior to the controversial **JBL** storyline with **John Cena**, during which JBL first attempted to light Cena's car on fire and then Cena ran a forklift into JBL's car.

Punk's ascension to the championship was also conveniently timed to coincide with the announcement of several major upgrades in the company's Wellness Program. The most significant changes involve the addition of new drugs to the list of banned substances, the use of health-risk screenings as a condition of signing a WWE contract, and the adoption of baseline cognitive function testing to monitor concussions.



Wrestling insiders are wondering if C.M. Punk's World title reign was timed to coincide with the recent tightening of WWE's Wellness Policy. As the "Straightedge Superstar," Punk is qualified to be the face of a cleaner WWE.

On the first front, WWE is responding to the use of more sophisticated agents designed to mask the use of anabolic steroids. The second is designed to increase the chance of early identification of potential heart conditions and cardiovascular problems that can lead to tragedy. The last appears to be a response to mounting evidence that points to potentially severe physical and mental health damage sustained by professional athletes who've suffered repeated concussions.

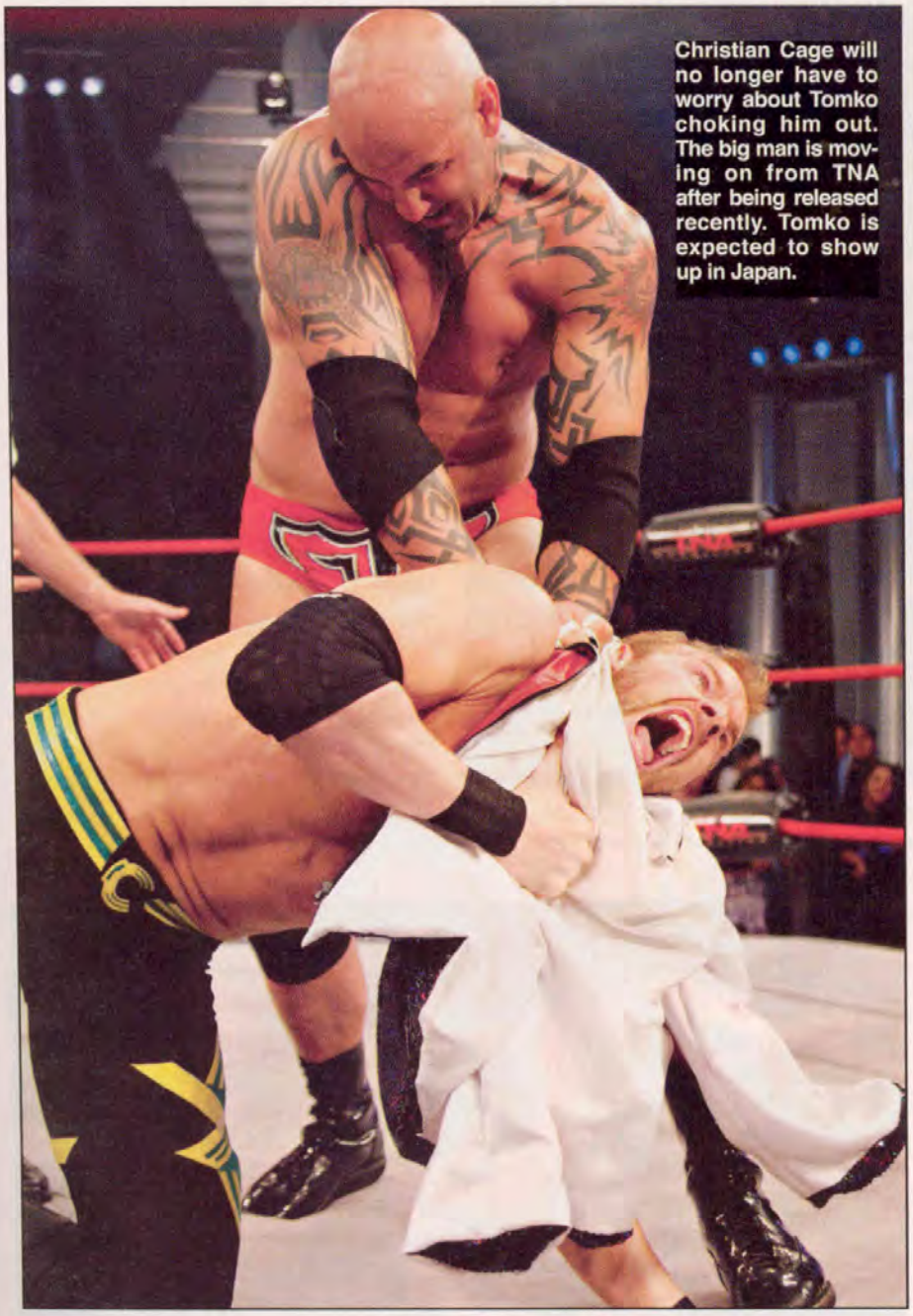
By the time this issue goes to press, **William Regal** and **Jimmy Wang Yang** will have returned from their WWE Wellness Policy-related suspensions.

Over in TNA, the **Abyss** feud with **Father James Mitchell** and his minions is over. TNA has released Mitchell, **Rellik**, **Black Reign**, and **Mesias** in a round of roster cuts. The promotion has also cut **Tomko** and former Team Canada manager **Scott D'Amore**.

The departure of Tomko, one of the best big men in the business, is the most surprising of the releases. Word is, Tomko made the mistake of playing hardball with TNA Creative about his character. Odds are he'll turn up in New Japan Pro Wrestling or some other Japanese promotion.

TNA will also be adding some new talent to the fold. Former WWE wrestler and manager **Shawn Daivari** is aboard, and is now known as **Sheik Abdul Bashir**. TNA may also add former WWE lower mid-card wrestler **Savio Vega** in a road agent capacity.

Rey Mysterio Jr., who is arguably WWE's most popular star among Latino fans, is in the process of negotiating a contract extension with the federation. Progress to



Christian Cage will no longer have to worry about Tomko choking him out. The big man is moving on from TNA after being released recently. Tomko is expected to show up in Japan.

date has been slow. Reportedly, Mysterio wants to be paid based on his appeal throughout Latin America and Spanish-speaking communities in the United States, rather than his solid (but not overwhelming appeal) among English-speaking fans.

In a related story, with the relationship between **Carlito** and WWE deteriorating, the federation has been heavily scouting for talent in Puerto Rico and Mexico to beef up its array of Latino stars, especially on Smackdown. The company reportedly has honed in on former employee **Essa Rios** (now wrestling in Mexico as **Mr. Aguila**) as well as **Damián 666** and several potential developmental talents in Puerto Rico. WWE was reportedly close to signing lucha star **Dos Caras Jr.** until Caras changed his mind upon learning he'd have to toil in Florida Championship Wrestling (WWE's developmental affiliate) until he picked up the North American wrestling style.

At the behest of **Vince McMahon**, WWE has brought back 1980s star **Tony Atlas** to manage ECW champion **Mark Henry**. McMahon has always been fond of Atlas, and Atlas was one of the company's marquee performers before age and personal problems took their toll. Previously, McMahon suggested signing Atlas as an on-air adviser for the now-departed **Bobby Lashley**, but deferred to Creative's resistance to the idea.

Former NFL football player and TNA/WWE wrestler **Monty Brown** recently made his first in-the-ring appearance in more than a year, making an unbilled appearance at a PCW show in Arlington, Texas. The "Alpha Male" didn't wrestle, but staged a run-in and declared on the mike that he's back in the business to stay.

Ron "The Truth" Killings has adopted the ring name **R-Truth** in his return to WWE, where he was previously known as K-Kwik. He'll be wrestling on the Smackdown roster, at least to start.

Score one for the **Ultimate Warrior** in his never-ending feud with Vince McMahon and WWE. Federation lawyers attempted to block the former world champion's $55 per autograph signing session at a Uniondale, New York, hotel near WWE's Great American Bash pay-per-view event.

The effort failed because the wrestler has legally changed his name to "Warrior," was advertised as a former WWF champion (WWE has relinquished all trademarks to the WWF name), and the performer owns his own title belt and was not displaying WWE property on advertisements for the appearance.

Evan Bourne successfully lobbied WWE management to allow him to do the shooting star press as his finishing move. Management had been concerned both by the dangerous nature of the move and the fact that Bourne's version was reminiscent of Mysterio Jr.'s. Whenever possible, WWE tries to avoid having multiple wrestlers use similar finishers unless it's tied to a storyline.

James "Sandman" Fullington recently made front-page news in the *New York Post*. As you might suspect, it wasn't for his oddly charismatic ring style. The former

High-flying Mr. Aguila, who competed as Essa Rios in the WWF, is on Vince McMahon's short list of Mexican superstars to sign. Aguila is one of several luchadores who could draw more Latino fans.

ECW and WWE cult favorite was a guest at a 75th birthday party for legendary manager **Capt. Lou Albano** in Yonkers, New York.

Allegedly, Sandman got into a heated confrontation with the owner of the restaurant where the party was held. The owner allegedly threw a bottle at Sandman, who responded by going into the kitchen and throwing dish racks full of glasses. As police rushed onto the scene, the inebriated wrestler reportedly started flinging the glassware at the officers until he was finally dragged down and subdued.

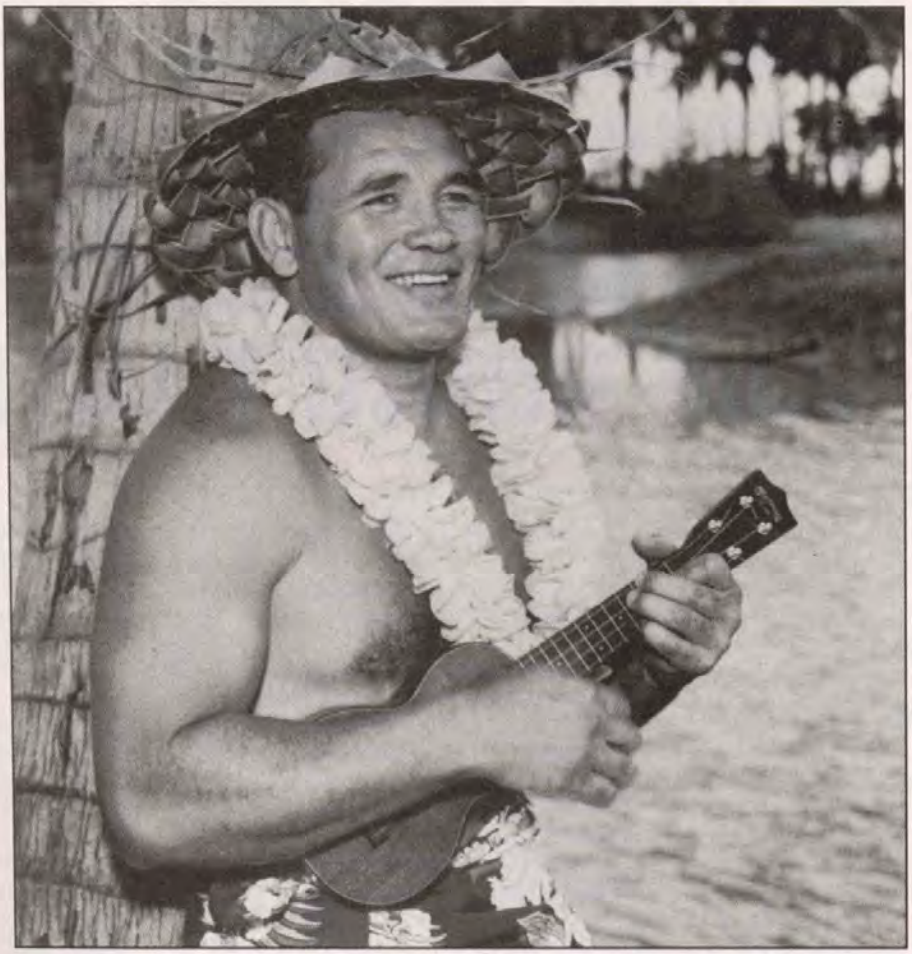
Sandman was subsequently arraigned on $10,000 bail and charged with a felony assault, criminal mischief, reckless endangerment, and resisting arrest. He must also undergo psychiatric evaluation.

Albano's niece, **Kami Albano**, has stated in interviews that she believes the restaurant's owner was equally to blame in the incident. Further complicating the situation for Sandman is his criminal record and longtime battle with alcoholism (humorously portrayed in his ECW persona, but a struggle that has threatened his career and personal life).

The Sandman's extreme antics didn't go over well with New York's finest when he was recently arrested following a brawl in a Yonkers restaurant. Sandman (arrest mug shot, inset) was charged with a host of felonies and misdemeanors.

In more pleasant news, the wife of WWE's **Randy Orton** has given birth to a healthy baby girl, **Alanna Marie Orton**.

The BBC recently ran a rather unusual story about WWE Intercontinental champion **Kofi Kingston**. Billed from Jamaica, he was actually born in Ghana and raised in the United States. Wrestlers assuming national or ethnic identities that are different from their own is one of the few age-old traditions in the business that survives to this day. What makes the situation unique is the fact that Kingston's mother, **Elizabeth Sarkodie-Mensah**, is the head of a Ghanaian-American organization, and was not pleased that her son would hide his origins, even as part of a wrestling persona. Much to her son's chagrin, she has subsequently granted interviews to



Hawaiian star Oni Wiki Wiki, who became well known in the Mid-Atlantic territory in the 1960s, passed away at age 88 in early-July.

the mainstream press, trying to set the record straight.

Val Venis will be out of action for several more months following recent shoulder surgery. He aggravated an existing shoulder problem during a spring WWE tour of Spain in a match against **Paul Birchall**. Venis has been unable to wrestle since sustaining the injury. The problem is considered correctable, although the injury did not respond to less invasive forms of treatment.

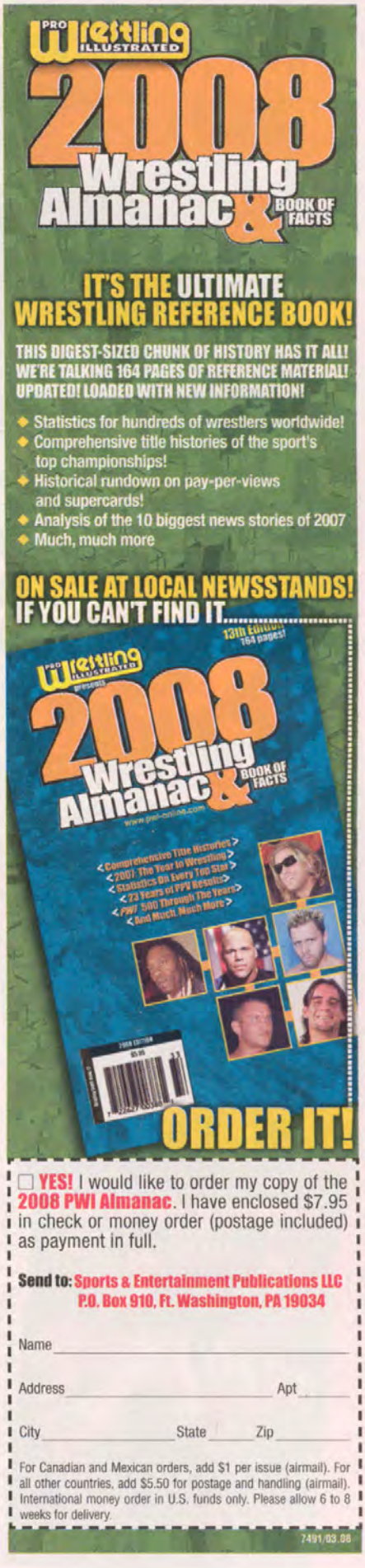
The wrestling world is mourning the recent death of **Frenchy Roberre**, one the Pacific Northwest territory's earliest television stars. In his 18-year career, spanning from 1950 to 1968, Roberre was a mainstay in the Portland, Oregon area. He also appeared in California and Southwest promotions, but always returned to Portland.

Other recent passings include those of 1960s Hawaiian and Mid-Atlantic performer **Oni Wiki Wiki**, **Jimmy Jackson**, 1960s and 1970s Japanese star **Masatake "The Great" Kusatsu**, **Harold Harris**, and longtime Stampede referee **Joe Lesperance**, who is believed to be the first ref to take on a pro-heel persona, cheating the likes of **Tex McKenzie** and **Mad Dog Vachon** out of deserved victories and inevitably getting his comeuppance.

Jackson's pro wrestling career in the 1980s for **Bill Watts'** Mid-South Wrestling was brief, but he was one of the most accomplished American amateur wrestlers of his generation. A three-time NCAA national champion at Oklahoma State and a three-time World Cup champion, Jackson represented the USA at the 1976 Olympics in Montreal.

He was 51 at the time of his death.

Our sincere condolences go out to the families and friends of all the deceased. □


Pro Wrestling Illustrated
2008
Wrestling Almanac & Book of Facts
IT'S THE ULTIMATE WRESTLING REFERENCE BOOK!
THIS DIGEST-SIZED CHUNK OF HISTORY HAS IT ALL! WE'RE TALKING 164 PAGES OF REFERENCE MATERIAL! UPDATED! LOADED WITH NEW INFORMATION!
Statistics for hundreds of wrestlers worldwide!
Comprehensive title histories of the sport's top championships!
Historical rundown on pay-per-views and supercards!
Analysis of the 10 biggest news stories of 2007
Much, much more
ON SALE AT LOCAL NEWSSTANDS!
IF YOU CAN'T FIND IT.....
13th Edition!
164 pages!
Comprehensive Title Histories
2007: The Year in Wrestling
Statistics on Every Top Star
23 Years of PPV Results
PWI 500 Through The Years
And Much, Much More
ORDER IT!

☐ **YES!** I would like to order my copy of the **2008 PWI Almanac**. I have enclosed $7.95 in check or money order (postage included) as payment in full.

Send to: Sports & Entertainment Publications LLC
P.O. Box 910, Ft. Washington, PA 19034

Name _____

Address _____ Apt _____

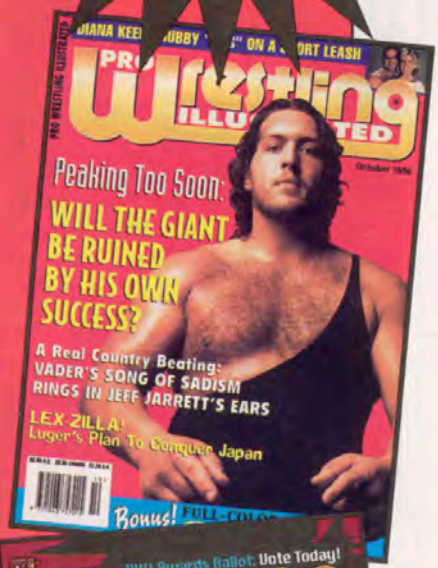
City _____ State _____ Zip _____

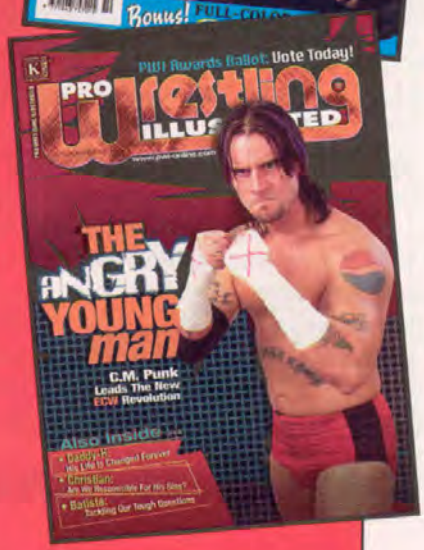
For Canadian and Mexican orders, add $1 per issue (airmail). For all other countries, add $5.50 for postage and handling (airmail). International money order in U.S. funds only. Please allow 6 to 8 weeks for delivery.

7491/03.08

PRO Wrestling ILLUSTRATED
HAS HULK HOGAN HAD ENOUGH?
JAKE VS. SID: JUSTICE IS SERVED!
Stars On The Horizon:
WRESTLING'S HOTTEST PROSPECTS FOR 1992

only $5 each Plus $2 P&H


PRO Wrestling ILLUSTRATED
Peaking Too Soon:
WILL THE GIANT BE RUINED BY HIS OWN SUCCESS?
A Real Country Beating:
VADER'S SONG OF SADISM
RINGS IN JEFF JARRETT'S EARS
LEX ZILLA!
Luger's Plan To Conquer Japan
Bonus!


PWI Awards Ballot: Vote Today!
PRO Wrestling ILLUSTRATED
THE ANGRY YOUNG man
C.M. Punk Leads The New ECW Revolution
Also Inside

BACK ISSUES OF PRO Wrestling® ILLUSTRATED ARE GOING FAST!

PLACE YOUR ORDER TODAY!

September 1990: The Hulkster's Wrath: 7,000 Miles To Violent Redemption. Centerfold: The Steiners. Plus: Jeff Jarrett, Sting, Destruction Crew, Four Horsemen, Curt Hennig.

February 1992: Has Hulk Hogan Had Enough? Centerfold: 1992 calendar. Plus: Sting, Justice-Roberts, hot prospects, Eddie Gilbert.

May 1992: Revitalized In Tokyo: Hulk Hogan Is Super-Psyched For WrestleMania VII! Centerfold: Rick Rude. Plus: Sting & Muta-Steiners, Jarrett & Fuller, Lightning Kid, Randy Savage, intimidation.

May 1996: Un-Natural! The WWF Has Finally Gone Too Far! Centerfold: Public Enemy. Plus: Jeff Jarrett, Dreamer-Raven, Dan Severn, Ric Flair, Giant.

October 1996: Peaking Too Soon: Will The Giant Be Ruined By His Own Success? Centerfold: Goldust. Plus: Big Van Vader, Ric Flair, Bulldog, Lex Luger.

May 1998: Starrcade Scandal! We Hate To Say It ... But Give The Belt Back To Hogan. Centerfold: Ric Flair. Plus: Mero & Sable, Taz, Taka Michinoku.

October 1998: Bret Screws Bret, Part II. Centerfold: Hunter Hearst Helmsley. Plus: Jim Ross, Marcus Bagwell, WWF controversy, FBI.

April 1999: The Crock! The Title Change That Screwed The World! Centerfold: Chris Jericho. Plus: Bill Goldberg, Tommy Dreamer, Booker T, more Unofficial/Officials.

May 1999: Who Holds The Key To WrestleMania XV? Centerfold: Konnan. Plus: Mark Henry, Sting-Nash, Bill Alfonso, Brian Hildebrand.

June 1999: The *PWI* Poll. Plus: Mankind, Flair & Turner, VMac, Steiners, New Japan-UFO.

July 1999: Warning! This Team Will Self-Destruct In 15 Seconds! Centerfold: X-Pac. Plus: New Jack-Dudleys, Jesse James, Venis & Godfather, Sting-Bischoff-Flair.

October 1999: Why The World Must Fear Scott Steiner, By Buff Bagwell. Centerfold: Mankind. Plus: Kane & X-Pac, The Godfather, Perry Saturn, 20th anniversary readers' poll.

Holiday 1999: *PWI* 500. Ninth Annual Special.

January 2000: The Millennium Man Mouths Off! An Unforgettable Hour With Chris Jericho! Centerfold: Taz. Plus: Chris Benoit, Sid-Goldberg, Triple-H.

February 2000: The Master Manipulator! How Stone-Cold Controls The WWF. Centerfold: Kane. Plus: Paul Heyman, Hogan-Bret-Sting-Luger.

April 2000: Stone-Cold vs. The Rock: Let's Settle It At WrestleMania! Centerfold: Chris Benoit. Plus: Dallas Page, Goldberg-Vicious, more Unofficial awards.

July 2000: Call It A Wrap, Jack! You've Done Your Share ... Go Home! Centerfold: Sid Vicious. Plus: Dusty Rhodes, Disco Inferno, DDP, Dudleys-Hardys.

September 2000: Wrestle McMania! Why The Peace Can't Last. Centerfold: Jeff Jarrett. Plus: Eric Bischoff, Dudleys, Raven.

October 2000: Scott Steiner: The Superstar The WWF Let Slip Away. Centerfold: Rikishi. Plus: Shawn Michaels, Austin-Rock, Rhino-RVD.

December 2000: Head Hog! Does Undertaker Have Enough Gas In His Tank To Rumble To The Top? Centerfold: Dallas Page. Plus: Kurt Angle, Rikishi, Vampiro-Sting, Japan.

FULL-COLOR BEGINNING WITH HOLIDAY 2000

January 2001: Who Does He Really Hate? Someone Will Pay For Austin's Pain! Plus: Steven Richards, Justin Credible, Gordon Solie, Jeff Jarrett, Arn-Sid.

March 2001: Hulk Hogan: WWF Fans Want Him Back! Plus: Mike Awesome, Rikishi, Jerry Lynn, Elix Skipper, Triple-H.

May 2001: The WrestleMania Curse! Will The Great One Ever Win The Big One? Plus: Vince McMahon, William Regal, Page & Nash, Ivory, Lance Storm, ECW.

June 2001 (116 Pages): The *PWI* Poll. Plus: Ric Flair, Chyna, Steve Austin.

July 2001: Women's Work! It Ain't What It Used To Be! Plus: Dudleys, Chavo Guerrero Jr., Justin Credible, Francine, Scott Steiner.

September 2001: WWF-WCW: The 10 Questions That Must Be Answered. Plus: Triple-H, Stacy Keibler, Paul Heyman, Matt Hardy.

October 2001 (116 Pages): Mid-Year Report. Top 50 stories, grades, half-year awards, predictions. Plus: Perry Saturn, Dallas Page, Terri.

January 2002: There's Something About Lita—What Makes Her The WWF's "It" Girl. Plus: Jericho-Stephanie, Mark Henry, X-Pac, Triple-H, Undertaker.

February 2002 (116 Pages): The State Of The Game. Includes: The states of the WWF, independents, international, the business, the art. Plus: Golderg.

March 2002: No More Joking, No More Choking: Y2J Takes A Serious Stab At Superstardom! Plus: Test, The Rock, Eric Bischoff, Bradshaw, Foley vs. Regal.

May 2002: The Mania To End All Manias! What Will Wrestling Look Like By WrestleMania X-9? Plus: Trish Stratus, RVD, Russ Haas, Big Bossman, WWF comedy.

July 2002: Steph Infection! How Can Triple-H Keep His Mind On His Game? Plus: Goldust-Terri, NWO, Ron Waterman, Spike & Tazz, Jazz.

August 2002 (116 Pages): Supercards 2002: WrestleManiaX8, WWA Revolution, Super 8. Plus: X-Pac, Steve Corino, Ric Flair.

September 2002: No Rock ... No Problem: The WWF Can Thrive Without The Great One. Plus: WWF draft, Billy Kidman, Sean O'Haire, Stanley Weston.

October 2002 (116 Pages): Mid-Year Report. Top 50 stories, grades, half-year awards, predictions. Plus: Lou Thesz, Francine, Edge.

November 2002: Stone-Cold Meltdown! Plus: Heyman & Lesnar, Lance Storm, NWA: TNA, DDP, A.J. Styles, Island Boys.

January 2003: Brock Aftershock: How Lesnar Changed The Future Of WWE. Plus: Chris Benoit, Low-Ki, Jericho-Flair, Rey Misterio Jr., SummerSlam at 15.

February 2003 (116 Pages): The State Of The Game. Includes: The states of Raw, Smackdown, independents, international, the business, the art.

March 2003: Rocky Horror! He Won't Forget What You Did Last Summer. Plus: Matt Hardy, Eddie Guerrero, Bass-WWE, Victoria, WWE's next wave.

June 2003 (116 Pages): The *PWI* Poll. Plus: Rey Misterio Jr.

August 2003 (116 Pages): Goldberg: He Has WWE Caught Between The Rock And A Hard Place! Plus: WrestleMania XIX, Shawn Michaels graduates, Paul London, Raven.

October 2003 (116 Pages): Mid-Year Report. Top 50 stories, grades, half-year awards, predictions. Plus: Mick Foley.

October 2004: Eugene, The Impossible Dream: When Will His Opponents Wake Up? Plus: Victoria, Edge, Dudleys, A.J. Styles, six-sided ring.

February 2005: A Yes Man? No Way! Ric Flair's Secret Plan Will Ruin Triple-H! Plus: Y2J, The Naturals, Luther Reigns, WrestleMania 21 countdown.

June 2005: Our Challenge To John Cena: Dominate 2005 ... Or We Don't Want To See You! Plus: Steve Austin, Austin Aries, Big Show, AMW.

August 2005: Kurt Angle: The 10 Reasons He's The Best Ever. Plus: Edge, Alex Shelley, Christy Hemme, DDP WWE Hall of Fame.

October 2005: Whole Lita Love: How Many Men Can One Woman Ruin? Plus: John Cena, C.M. Punk, McMahon-Bischoff-Paul E., A.J. Styles.

November 2005: *PWI* 500. Plus: Muhammed Hassan, Batista, RVD, Samoa Joe, Chris Jericho, *PWI* Tag Team Wish List.

February 2006: Losing Street Cred? The Time Is Now For Cena To Get Tough. Plus: Jerry Lawler, Eddie Guerrero, Austin-Hogan.

August 2006: Exclusive! Edge Comes Out Swinging! Plus: Brother Runt, Benoit & Lashley, Milano Collection AT.

December 2006: The Angry Young Man! C.M. Punk Leads The New ECW Revolution. Also: Triple-H, Christian, Batista.

February 2007: Hollywood Ending: Cena's Pumped For A Year Of Wrestling Only! Also: Randy Orton, Hardcore Holly, Booker-Batista, Kurt Angle.

Summer 2007: The Match Vince Let Get Away ... And The Title He Wouldn't! Also: Hogan-Big Show, Team 3D, WrestleMania 23 weekend, ECW.

PRO Wrestling ILLUSTRATED

Send to:
Sports & Entertainment Publications LLC
P.O. Box 910
Fort Washington, PA 19034

Please indicate method of payment:

☐ Check or money order (enclosed and payable to Sports & Entertaiment Publications LLC)

☐ VISA #: _____

☐ MasterCard #: _____

Expiration date: ____/____ (MO/YR) _ _ _ (3 DIGIT SECURITY CODE)

Signature _____

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____ CITY _____

STATE ____ ZIP _____ EMAIL _____

For Canadian and Mexican orders, the postage and handling charge is $3 per issue (airmail). For all other countries, the postage and handling charge is $7.50 per issue (airmail). Int'l money order in U.S. funds only. Please allow 6-8 weeks for delivery.

Please send me the back issues I have checked off. I have enclosed $5 for each issue (plus $2 each for postage and handling) as payment in full or provided my credit card number to charge my purchase.

☐ SEP 90	☐ JAN 01	☐ MAR 03
☐ FEB 92	☐ MAR 01	☐ JUN 03
☐ MAY 92	☐ MAY 01	☐ AUG 03
☐ MAY 96	☐ JUN 01	☐ OCT 03
☐ OCT 96	☐ JUL 01	☐ OCT 04
☐ MAY 98	☐ SEP 01	☐ FEB 05
☐ OCT 98	☐ OCT 01	☐ MAR 05
☐ APR 99	☐ JAN 02	☐ JUN 05
☐ MAY 99	☐ FEB 02	☐ AUG 05
☐ JUN 99	☐ MAR 02	☐ OCT 05
☐ JUL 99	☐ MAY 02	☐ NOV 05
☐ OCT 99	☐ JUL 02	☐ FEB 06
☐ JAN 00	☐ AUG 02	☐ AUG 06
☐ FEB 00	☐ SEP 02	☐ DEC 06
☐ APR 00	☐ OCT 02	☐ FEB 07
☐ SEP 00	☐ NOV 02	☐ SUM 07
☐ OCT 00	☐ JAN 03	
☐ DEC 00	☐ FEB 03	

In case of sellout, indicate two substitute choices: _____ _____

7710/06.08

in focus

By Dave Lenker

HOW I SPENT MY SUMMER VACATION ...

We've all had to write that ridiculous essay at some point in our lives. It's usually the question everyone asks on the first day of school, too. You know the one, what did you do with your summer vacation? I'd like to tell you I spent my time in beautiful Ocean City, New Jersey, this summer catching up on my wrestling DVD viewing, maybe kicking back with a wrestling book or two, or even sniffing out an independent card somewhere along the coast of the Garden State.

I did none of that, however. I spent most of my time parked on a new beach chair in the sand. My viewing on the beach—let's just say it wasn't DVDs.

I watched no wrestling, read no wrestling, talked no wrestling, and didn't bother to lug a computer with me in case of any breaking news. My hope was that I would return with a bit of a fresh perspective on the sport I've now covered for more than 15 years. Mission accomplished, I think. Thoughts on three issues this month:

FIRST FAVRE, NOW FLAIR?

Seems like there was a lot more acrimony in the split between supposed NFL legend Brett Favre and his long-time employer, the Green Bay Packers, than there was behind the split between Ric Flair and WWE. WWE more or less buried the news on its official website this summer.

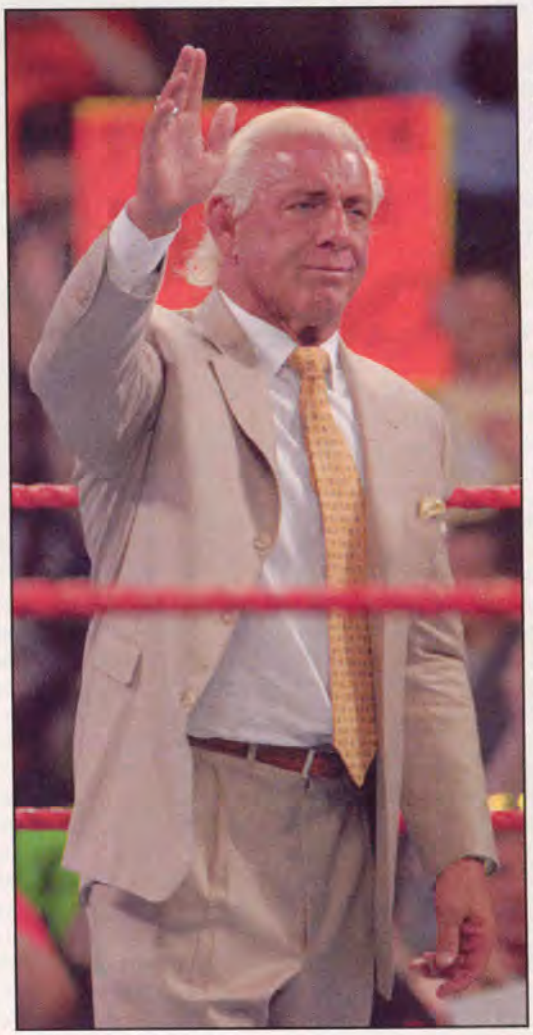
Pretty much everything about Flair's retirement at WrestleMania 24 rang genuine with me when it happened, and it still does—as of press time at least (I reserve the right to change my mind later).

I think Favre, on the other hand, is a phony.

But won't it be interesting to see how the Flair thing plays out. Perhaps he'll reconsider and end up back in his role as an ambassador for WWE. I couldn't blame him if he was upset WWE reserved the right to nix any appearance he may have wanted to make in celebration of his retirement, and used it, too. An NWA Hall of Fame induction ceremony a few months ago comes to mind.

If he just wants to do a victory lap with smaller promotions that want him to stop by, sign some autographs, make an appearance, say a few words, and so forth, good for him for cutting ties. If he has any thought in the back, front, or side of his mind that he, like Favre, maybe walked away a little too soon, I can't see the point. Where would he wrestle? For TNA? In Japan? In Ring of Honor? None seems like a good option to me.

I have looked forward to seeing Favre fling interception after interception for the New York Jets since the day in August he was traded out of Green Bay. I hope Flair doesn't leave me feeling the same way. Wouldn't it be wonderful if that whole retirement weekend *didn't* end up looking like a bit of a sham?



For years, Ric Flair has wowed fans all over the world. Now that he has retired, some feel he should avoid following a path like New York Jets' quarterback Brett Favre's and keep his legacy intact.

FOLEY FINDS HIS NICHE ... OH, UH, NEVER MIND

I know a lot of you out there had to be every bit as uncomfortable watching Mick Foley make one meaningless appearance after another in WWE over the past few years. Never did I think he'd settle for such inanity after his retirement from full-time wrestling. I thought he cared too much if anything.

But I enjoyed the chemistry he had calling the Smackdown matches with his good buddy Jim Ross. Foley is relaxed, honest, and insightful at the broadcast table. It gave him a real purpose in WWE. He doesn't even try too hard to be clever, as he became wont to do when cutting some silly promos in recent years. But there was some serious talk that Foley might be

Mick Foley has long been known for his daredevil style and high pain threshold. But even though Foley finds himself sitting behind, rather than being put through, an announcers' table, his career is far from being pain-free.

done with WWE after getting laid out by Edge a few weeks before Edge's SummerSlam "Hell In A Cell" showdown with The Undertaker. I'm sure a guy like Foley didn't take well to the little voice in his headset during those Smackdown broadcasts. That little voice, of course, wasn't so little. It was pretty loud and important. You see, Vince McMahon makes sure his announcers make the points he wants them to make during shows and he doesn't wait until after the show is over to let them know.

I'm sure there's more to the latest round of bad feelings between Foley and McMahon. Things seem to get ugly between Vince and virtually all of his top stars at some point—especially those with the stroke to speak freely, which Foley clearly has. Things usually get resolved, though. I hope they do this time, too. Foley nearly signed with TNA a few years ago before ultimately agreeing to re-up with WWE. I'm sure he might have a brilliant idea or two that he could turn into interesting short-term feuds in TNA or maybe even back in ROH, for which he previously made a few appearances. I've been critical of Foley in recent years, but I'd like to see how good he could become once he gets some real experience as a broadcaster.

TALES OF TWO COMEBACKS

Probably the two biggest in-ring comebacks in WWE over the last year or so have been those engineered by Chris Jericho and JBL. Y2J had been off pursuing other interests for two years, whereas JBL had an extended stint as Smackdown's mostly heel commentator.

I had high hopes for both. JBL stayed away from the ring long enough to make a return seem tantalizing. And Jericho is just so versatile and probably even a little underrated. He may never be a bona fide main-eventer, but he's half a step below that and better than we realize sometimes.

Unfortunately, Jericho's return was ill-conceived by WWE. Sure, the whole mystery surrounding those cryptic messages about someone saving us that we'd see on our TV screens every Monday night for what seemed like forever was a nice touch. But Jericho returned in the middle of the Randy Orton rebuilding project. Orton's WWE title reign was going very well and not ready to end, and Jericho challenged him immediately, so Jericho had to find a way not to win that title without really losing to Orton. That left him just kind of there in the main-event picture on Raw.

Proof of this came when he was inserted into the "Money In The Bank" match at WrestleMania 24. If you're one of the top guys and someone who can really go in the ring but WWE doesn't really know what to do with you at the time of 'Mania, MITB is for you.

But after a brief feud with JBL, Jericho has really excelled in building a feud with Shawn Michaels. Considering HBK's vast skills, that may not be the hardest thing for a WWE wrestler to do, but credit Jericho for being the one to make this a long and slow-developing feud with several twists and turns more and more intriguing as it progressed. I look forward to see him matched soon with C.M. Punk or whoever holds the World title.

JBL seems to lose steam every week. I grew to appreciate his bombastic approach to promos and the way he carried himself so cockily when he ruled Smackdown in 2004, and I admire his desire to change things up four years later, but the ultra-serious, cold, unemotional delivery comes across so dull. His matches have been uninspiring for the most part, and his spot near the top of Raw cards feels like a reward for loyal service—and like Vince McMahon isn't sure what he wants to do with the World title.

Maybe he figures it's safe to put a "proven" star like JBL in the ring with a newbie like Punk. Seems to me JBL still has a lot to prove. □

off the top rope

By Brandi Mankiewicz

If you wish to contribute to Brandi's mailbag, send your letters to:
TOP ROPE Box 1148 Ft. Washington, PA 19034
Or send e-mail to: **offthetoprope@yahoo.com**

(Editor's note: The opinions expressed in this column are those of the letter writers and Brandi Mankiewicz herself. They do not necessarily reflect the editorial views of this magazine.)

YOU'LL BE HAPPY to know that I almost had a mark-out moment. Yes I, your Queen, actually found an event on a wrestling show that moved me to crack a smile. Normally, I watch with disgust, cursing most of what I see on TV. Watching C.M. Punk win the WWE title made my blackened heart momentarily soften.

Yes, I realize you wannabes clap your hands off for Punk, but I stand to applaud him despite your drooling love for him. He's a shining example of what you all should strive to become: a winner. Punk's ascension has been nothing short of awesome. It'd make a fantastic After School Special *movie. All of you aspiring independent wrestlers need to study his career so you can learn how it's supposed to be done.*

I would love to trade my crown for the Flair belt, but I don't think Punk's the tiara type. Besides, that hugely obnoxious belt would clash with my wardrobe. It's bigger than most of my skirts. Now there's a visual of your champion—both of them! On to your nonsense ...

Brandi,

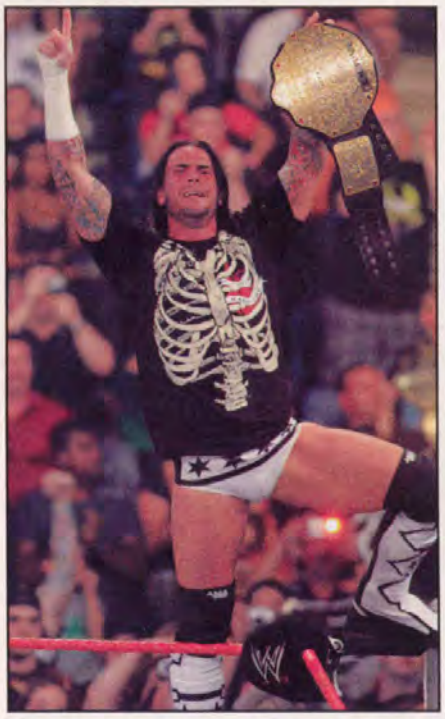
With the way Vinnie Mac is running things as of late, do you think more wrestlers (mainly female wrestlers) will jump to the TNA or even ROH bandwagon for that matter?

JESSE PEREZ
jessepaulperez@yahoo.com

Jesse,

Honestly, I really don't understand what you're getting at. Vince McMahon and company are treating the female competitors much better today than women ever were in the past. They receive prominent face time on the weekly TV shows, they get guest appearances on mainstream television, and Hugh Hefner picks one to be featured in *Playboy* just before WrestleMania each year. It wasn't too long ago Trish Stratus was barking like a dog in the center of the ring.

I truly doubt any female wrestler—or male for that matter—sees the same potential in either TNA or ROH. TNA is a strong number two promotion, but it is still light years behind WWE in many respects. I have been an ROH fan since its first show, but I honestly can't consider them in the same range as either TNA or WWE. What it comes down to is that there are just simply more assets to being a WWE Diva than a female wrestler with any other company. Every female wrestler I know in WWE loves it there. I can't say that about non-WWE girls.



What could thaw the Ice Queen's heart you ask? How about the "Straightedge Superstar" C.M. Punk grabbing the WWE World title and holding on to it. Punk's image and style make even the most hardened fans feel a little bit softer inside.

Your Majesty,

After reading your comments about Gino Hernandez in various issues, I felt compelled to watch some of the old footage from World Class Championship Wrestling, along with the DVD the WWE came out with about the World Class days.

I wanted to ask you: Had Gino been alive during the Monday Night Wars, do you think he would have been with WCW or WWF? To me it's a tossup because WCW definitely could have paid more, but I believe Vince McMahon and WWE could have done a better job of marketing him. A part of me does also wonder whether, with his obvious charisma, would he have gone the route of The Rock and forsaken wrestling for Hollywood?

ROBERT SCHUSCHU
the_blitz44125@yahoo.com

My Lowly Knave,

Everyone who reads this column needs to watch every Gino

Hernandez compilation they can find. I don't care if it's on a WWE-produced DVD or bootlegged on youtube. His matches and interviews are some of the most passionate you'll ever see.

I do think Gino would have done well in either WWE or WCW. I'm just not sure which would have been a better fit. Just as his old partner Tully Blanchard looked out of place in WWE when he and Arn first went there, Gino may have been just as awkward. Despite this, he probably would have adjusted better than Tully. I like to think that Gino would have been more like Steve Austin—who had a lukewarm run as the Ring Master before his whole "Stone-Cold" thing. Look what happened once Austin found his groove.

Dear Brandi,

Arn Anderson once said, "Guys who should be buying a ticket were suddenly getting contracts." That statement holds true, especially today because I see more young scrawny punks trying to pass themselves off as wrestlers than ever before. The Hardy Boys are a rarity. What happened to the times when wrestlers looked like, well, wrestlers?

BRYANT CRAIGHEAD
alvinbryhead@yahoo.com

Dear Bryant,

If you care to delve into my past comments, you would know that I am nodding my head in agreement with Arn as I write this response. I remember when I first started with *PWI* back in 1994. Some of the first independent wrestlers I met were Ace Darling, Devon Storm, and Lance (a.k.a. Simon) Diamond. I remember thinking that they seemed small in comparison to some of the veteran wrestlers in the lockerroom. I'm 5'9", so I was just a smidge smaller than them. As the years progressed, Ace, Devon, and Lance became the largest ones in the locker room—and I was towering over the kids who thought they were gonna be the next coming of Steve Austin or The Hardy Boys. It just keeps getting worse, too. Now, I doubt the latest round of indy wannabes wouldn't even have to bend over to kiss my feet. It's like being around Little Louie, my favorite midget—only minus the talent.

You think women have it bad in WWE? Ask Michelle McCool if she would rather be the WWE Divas champion or topless on her hands and knees barking like a dog.

Letter of the Month (taken verbatim from actual letters to share my torture with you all):

"Queen Brandi"

I just received the Aug. issue , I read your response to my letter and just as I expected, you did what you do best, Cower away from the Question. It seems that if you haven't a good answer to a Question,you go on the attack of the person asking it.

As far as menial mental skills and horrible grasp of the English language, I challenge you to step away from your spell checker and file cabinet of which you refer to for facts and I'll take you on in a game of Scrabble,Bookworm or any other word contest of your choosing, You can even bring a dictionary.

My grasp of the English language has been more than adequate enough to purchase the very magazine that that employs inept people to handle the fans inquiries properly.

My main question was not answered ,Perhaps Mr. Patterson had something to do with your employment? I agree with what you said about Gino and his so-called friends manning up and helping him out,

The staff of PWI should man up and put someone in this column to do what you're supposed to do,answer questions and not belittle the very people that purchase your product and look to you for answers. Print that verbatim.

Dennis Wyatt
dwdw316@yahoo.com

Chump Dennis,

I purposely did not answer your inane question about Pat Patterson out of respect for Patterson and the twisted shred of decency my readers expect from me. As a lowly fan, you do have a right to pose such a horrible question, but as a writer, editor, and all-around awesome human being, I saw no reason to give it a second glance. I answered your other drivel, but made an executive decision to ignore your blatant ignominy. If you care to notice, I don't always answer every stinking question posed to me. I pick and choose what to address because of space limitations. I can only answer so much in each issue. I choose to either make an example of, or completely ignore, things I consider sophomoric. □

BACK ISSUES OF the Wrestler®

Don't miss a single issue of the magazine that has thrilled wrestling fans for two generations, THE WRESTLER! Complete your collection of the most respected wrestling publication in the world! Supplies are limited, so don't delay—order today!

July 1982: Harley Race—His Destiny Is In The Hands Of Tommy Rich. Also: Rick Steamboat, Chief Jay Strongbow, Buzz Sawyer, Ric Flair, Roddy Piper.

Sept. 1983: Nick Bockwinkel Forces Hulk Hogan Into Exile: And Only The Fans Can Bring Him Back. Also: Briscos, Blackwell-Kerry-Race, Paul Ellering, Mulligan & Windham.

Dec. 1983: The Night The AWA World Title Was Stolen From Mil Mascaras. Also: Roddy Piper, Larry Zbyszko, Dino Bravo, Fabulous Ones, Garvin & Sunshine.

March 1984: Is Tito Santana Trying To Blackmail The WWF? Also: Wayne & Sawyer, Hogan-Race, David Von Erich, Jesse Ventura.

July 1984: Tommy Rich Is Back! And He Owes It All To The Fans. Also: Valiant-Rhodes, Ric Flair, Mike Von Erich, Billy Jack.

Aug. 1984: Garvin vs. Roberts: "Hands Of Stone" Crushes "The Snake." Also: Freebirds-Devastation Inc., Sawyer-Sullivan, Lawler & Dillon, McDaniel-Race.

Nov. 1984: The $50,000 Full-Nelson Challenge Match: Billy Jack Gets Bloody Revenge Against Superstar Graham. Also: Roddy Piper, Heenan & Salto, Brody & Hansen, Kerry Von Erich.

Dec. 1984: The Tully Blanchard-Rick Steamboat Feud: Will Dusty Rhodes End It ... Or Make It Worse? Also: Tito Santana, Martel-Atlas, D. Funk, Mike Von Erich, Williams-Taylor.

Feb. 1985: Greg Valentine Wins Tito Santana's Intercontinental Title ... But Does He Deserve To Be Champion? Also: Ronnie Garvin, Warriors-Sheepherders, Flair-Billy Jack, Nikita Koloff.

May 1985: The Road Warriors vs. Dusty Rhodes & Manny Fernandez: Exclusive Coverage Of The Historic Tag Team Superbowl! Also: Al-Kaissie-Gagne, Backlund-Race, Haynes-Kamala, Tito Santana.

June 1985: Are The WWF Rulebreakers Singling Out Barry Windham For Destruction? Also: Zbyszko-Backlund, Rhodes-Blanchard, Tommy Rich, Oliver-Haynes.

Aug. 1985: Ten Days Of Blood And Glory: The Road Warriors Invade Japan! Also: Terry Taylor, Magnum T.A., Bugsy McGraw, Sheik & Volkoff-Windham & Rotundo, 20th anniversary.

Oct. 1985: David Shultz Gets An NWA Title Shot: Ric Flair—"I Wrestle The Men Hulk Hogan Is Afraid Of!" Also: Misty Blue, Rick Martel, Kendall Windham, George Steele, Killer Brooks, all-time top 10.

June 1986: Kerry Reveals His Secret: "I've Told Magnum T.A. How To Beat Ric Flair!" Also: Steve Williams, Hogan-Orton, Flair-Bockwinkel, Lex Luger.

Nov. 1986: Morton & Gibson Take A Trip To Badstreet U.S.A.: The Rock 'n' Roll Express vs. The Freebirds. Also: Eddie Gilbert, Hogan-Orndorff, Mike Von Erich, Mulligan-Bass.

Dec. 1986: Ric Flair's NWA Title Reign: Last Chance To Silence The Critics! Also: Nikita Koloff, Gilbert & Sting, Hogan-Piper, Abdullah-Adams, Nick Bockwinkel.

Jan. 1987: Bobby Heenan's Bitter Crusade To Destroy Hulk Hogan. Also: Borne & Sawyer, Garvins, Ted DiBiase, Misty Blue Simmes.

Feb. 1987: Tragedy Strikes Wrestling: Magnum T.A. Needs Your Prayers Now More Than Ever. Also: Roberts-Steamboat, Crusher Yurkof, Terry Gordy, Wendell Cooley.

March 1987: Ivan & Khrushchev's Kremlin Orders: Crush Nikita Koloff's Russian Revolution! Also: Barry Windham, One Man Gang, Brian Adias, Savage-Steamboat, Jimmy Snuka.

June 1987: The Hart Foundation vs. The Can-Ams: Special Analysis Of This WWF Superfeud! Also: Nick Bockwinkel, Paul Orndorff, Rhodes & Murdoch, Steve Williams.

Sept. 1987: Independence Day! Also: Hennig-Bockwinkel, Hart Foundation, Koloffs, Bubba Rogers, Missy Hyatt.

Oct. 1987: The Honky Tonk Man Wins The Intercontinental Title: Is Randy Savage The Fans' Last Hope. Also: Kerry Von Erich, Ken Patera, Sting-Gilbert, Horsemen-Freebirds, Zbyszko-Gagne.

Dec. 1987: Hulk Hogan: Will He Be Drowned By The New Wave Of Challengers? Also: Hennig-Lawler, Windham-Steiner, Flair-Williams, Brutus Beefcake, Ronnie Garvin.

Jan. 1988: The Experts Agree: The Road Warriors Will Turn Bad In 1988! Also: Koloff-Taylor, Curt Hennig, Duggan-DiBiase.

Feb. 1988: Ric Flair Admits: "I'm Nothing Without The NWA Belt!" Also: Kerry Von Erich, Jim Cornette, Hogan-Andre, Hennig-Lawler, Terry Taylor.

March 1988: After Four Years As Champion ... Only Hulk Hogan Can Beat Hulk Hogan. Also: Warriors-Demolition, Steve Williams, Luger & Dillon, Calgary, Terry Gordy.

May 1988: Belt Or No Belt ... Hulk Hogan Is Still The People's Champion! Also: Owen Hart, Tatum & Victory, Scott Hall, Madusa Miceli, Luger-Arn.

June 1988: How Sting's War With Ric Flair Could Make Him A Horseman! Also: Bobby Heenan, Martel-Zenk, Kerry-Gordy, Ted DiBiase, Nikita Koloff.

Oct. 1988: The Fantastics Declare: "We Will Not Share Our Fans With The Rock 'n' Roll Express!" Also: Rhodes-Windham, Curt Hennig, Roberts-Rude, Rougeaus, Jim Garvin.

Jan. 1989: The Horsemen Destroyed! The World Title Gained! But The Midnight Express Must Still Prove Themselves! Also: Top Guns, Hart & Rougeaus, Andre-Savage-Hulk, Terry Gordy, Kevin Von Erich.

March 1989: Scared Stiff! "Don't Say Snake!" Also: Jeff Jarrett, Cactus Jack, Ric Flair, Bam Bam Bigelow, Hercules, Iron Sheik.

June 1989: Ultimate Warrior's Mission Impossible: Destroy Randy Savage For Hulk Hogan. Also: Rick Steamboat, Rick Martel, Larry Zbyszko, Luger-Windham by Sting, Ric Flair.

July 1989: Dino Bravo: The Man Hulk Hogan Cannot Beat! Also: Flair-Steamboat, Rhodes & Perez, Road Warriors & Ellering, Michael Hayes.

Aug. 1989 (Special Issue): Supercard Sunday! Exclusive Coverage Of WrestleMania V And Clash Of Champions VI. Also: Kerry-Embry, Randy Savage, Great Muta, Ted DiBiase, Teddy Long.

Oct. 1989: No Holds Barred! Hogan & Beefcake vs. Savage & Zeus: An Exclusive Preview & Analysis. Also: Eric Embry, Four Horsemen, Teddy Long, Hayes-Luger, Art Barr, Billy Jack Haynes.

Jan. 1990: The Hulk Hogan Book Of Lists. Also: Brian Pillman, Rich-Luger, Tully & Arn, P.Y. Chu-Hi, Greg Gagne.

March 1990: Funk-Flair: "I Quit!—One War Ends, Two More Begin. Also: Nikita Koloff, Survivor Series, Steiners, Hogan-Zeus, Jim Cornette.

April 1990: Hulk Hogan: A Decade Of Greatness. Also: Luger-Flair, Woman, Piper-Heenan, Billy Travis, Badd Company.

July 1990: My 10 Challenges To Ric Flair, By Lex Luger. Also: Lanny Poffo, Dusty-Savage, Luger-Flair, Doom, Tully Blanchard.

Aug. 1990: Hogan-Warrior II: You Can Make It Happen. Also: Eric Embry, Demolition, Doom, Larry Zbyszko.

Sept. 1990: The Ultimate Warrior Wimps Out! Why He Won't Wrestle Hulk Hogan. Also: Billy Jack Haynes, Lex Luger, Doom-Steiners, Tugboat, Kerry-Borne.

Oct. 1990: Hulk Hogan vs. Earthquake: Exclusive SummerSlam Preview & Analysis. Also: Ultimate Warrior, Ric Flair, Tommy Rich, Tasmanian Devil, Chris Von Erich.

Feb. 1991: The Incredible "Halloween Havoc Hoax"! Unraveling The Diabolical Plot. Also: Muta-Steamboat, Hogan-Hart, Ultimate Warrior, Cornette & Express, Norman.

March 1991: Warning To The Ultimate Warrior: Roddy Piper Wants You! Also: Gilbert-Jarrett, Cornette & Express, Teddy Long, Survivor Series, Scott Norton.

April 1991: Hulk Hogan: The Challenges That Remain. Also: Ted DiBiase, Skyscrapers, Lex Luger, Tom Zenk, Fabulous Ones.

May 1991: Only Hulk Hogan Can Rid The WWF Of The Stench Of Sgt. Slaughter. Also: Ric Flair, Bobby Eaton, Sheik-Brazil, Power & Glory, Terry Funk.

June 1991: How Much Longer Can We Depend On Hulk Hogan? Also: Nasty Boys, Sting, Flair-Gigante, Cactus Jack, Kevin Von Erich.

July 1991: Can Ric Flair Shatter The "Myth" Of Japanese Superiority? Also: Embry & Prichard, LOD-Nastys, Steiners, Savage & Elizabeth.

Aug. 1991: If Sgt. Slaughter Said "I'm Sorry" ... Would Hulk And The World Forgive Him? Also: Luger-Nikita, Hennig-Davey Boy, Lanny Poffo, Bam Bam Bigelow.

Nov. 1991: Lex Luger Wins The Title—But Loses His Fans. Also: Rick Steamboat, Roddy Piper, Global, Diamond Studd, Lawler-Embry.

Jan. 1992: The LOD's Championship Catastrophe: Overpowered By The Natural Disasters. Also: Johnny B. Badd, Mr. Hughes, Jake Roberts, Ronnie Gossett.

Feb. 1992: Shocking WWF Report: McMahon Offers Bounty On Flair—Will Vince Pay The Piper? Also: Ron Simmons, Tito Santana, Bob Backlund, R. Steiner-Abdullah.

March 1992: After Survivor Series & Tuesday In Texas: Has The WWF Title Suffered Irreparable Damage? Also: Brian Pillman, Anderson & Bruiser, Rude-Sting, Mountie-Hart, Jeff Jarrett.

April 1992: After A Year Of Tragedy & Turmoil: The Magic Is Back In WCW! Also: Chris Candido, Paul Orndorff, Lady X, Paul Bearer, Hennig & Flair, Michaels & Jannetty.

Dec. 1992: He's *Baaaaaack!* Jake Roberts Slithers Into WCW. Also: Paul E. Dangerously, Ron Simmons, Hulk Hogan, Michaels-Martel, Gilberts-Rock 'n' Rolls.

June 1992: In Ric Flair's High-Stakes Championship Game, Hulk Hogan & Sid Justice Are Mere Pawns. Also: Eddie Gilbert, Ultimate Warrior, Vinnie Vegas, WCW titles, Koko B. Ware.

July 1992: "Number Two Just Won't Do": For Rick Rude, The U.S. Belt Means Failure. Also: Madusa, Gorilla Monsoon, LOD, Nurse Vanessa, Greg Valentine, Sabu.

Aug. 1992: The Ultimate Warrior: WrestleMania's Accidental Hero. Also: Bunkhouse matches, Undertaker-Roberts, Sting, JYD, Rob Van Dam.

Sept. 1992: Hey, Legion Of Doom—Go For The Title Or Go Away! Also: Repo-Crush, Mondo Kleen, Freebirds-Valentine & Taylor, Dangerous Alliance, Moondogs.

Oct. 1992: British Bulldog & Ultimate Warrior: Why They'll Be Crowned At SummerSlam. Also: Scotty Flamingo, Brian Lee, Martel-Tatanka, Steve Austin, Sting.

Nov. 1992: WWF Beware! It's The Perfect Time For A Curt Hennig Comeback! Also: Crush, Butch Reed, Sting, Buddy Rogers, Dan Spivey.

Jan. 1993: Sting Turns Sadistic: "Hurting Jake Makes Me Happy!" Also: Anderson & Eaton, Bushwhackers-Moondogs, Ramon-Savage, Natural Disasters, Masa Chono.

Feb. 1993: WWF Champion Bret Hart: His Five Most Dangerous Challenges. Also: Sgt. Slaughter, Steve Austin, Rick Steiner, Bob Backlund, Terry Taylor.

March 1993 (Special Edition): 1992—The Year In Pictures. Also: Madusa-Paul E., Curt Hennig, Davey Boy Smith, Jesse Ventura, Predictions For '93.

April 1993 What's In? What's Out? Also: Razor Ramon, Rick Steamboat, Patriot, Tatanka, Brian Christopher.

May 1993: Sumo Sadism: Will Yokozuna Make His Biggest Splash At WrestleMania? Also: Jim Cornette, Christopher-Jarrett, Benoit-Scorpio, Windham & Rhodes, Hennig-Luger.

Nov. 1993: Bret Hart vs. Lex Luger: It's Not Over Yet! Also: Rude-Dustin, Hulk Hogan, Marty Jannetty, Heavenly Bodies, Tatanka, Sherri Martel.

May 1994: Aftershocks! How The Royal Rumble Shook Up WrestleMania. Also: Hulk Hogan, Boss, Douglas-Sherri, Patriot, improve WCW.

July 1994: Ric Flair vs. Hulk Hogan: We Preview The Inevitable Battle. Also: Dreamer-Snuka, Jim Crockett's WWN, Ted DiBiase, Shane Douglas, Terra Ryzing.

Aug. 1994: Bret's Nightmare Team Becomes A Reality: Owen Hart & Yokozuna. Also: Cactus-Vader, MOM, Flair-Badd, Nasty Boys, Luna Vachon.

Sept. 1994 (Special Issue): WWF Midyear Report! Also: Big Van Vader, Parker-Hollywood Blonds, Sting-Rude, WWF legal problems, Prince Kharis, Bunkhouse-Rhodes, Public Enemy.

Jan. 1995: Our Holiday Wish List For 1995. Also: Johnny B. Badd, DiBiase-Tatanka, Bob Backlund, PG-13, Hacksaw Duggan.

April 1995: Imagine Wrestling Today If ... Also: Gunn & Smothers, Harlem Heat, Money Inc., Lawler-Cornette.

May 1995: Aftershocks! How The Royal Rumble Shook Up WrestleMania. Also: Big Bossman, Sherri-Douglas, Hulk Hogan, The Patriot.

July 1995: Hulk Hogan's Contract With America. Also: Marty Jannetty, Brian Pillman, Lawrence Taylor, Bill Dundee.

Oct. 1995: President Backlund?! Also: Steiners, Austin & Pillman, Miss Texas, Gordon Solie.

Winter 1995: Exclusive Preview: Sting vs. Hogan: This Time It's For Real! Also: Steiners, Yankem-Undertaker, Bodies-Cornette, Arn Anderson.

Nov. 1996: Brian Pillman: Next WWF Champ! Also: Giant-Sting, Ray Stevens, Dick Murdoch, Cloudy, John Tenta, WCW shuffle.

Jan. 1997: It Could Happen! Hogan's Next Move ... Buy WCW! Also:

Undertaker, New Jack, Owen-Bulldog, Ted DiBiase.

Feb. 1997: Wrestling's Top Stars: What 1997 Has In Store For Them! Also: Michaels-Hart, Pit Bull I, Rey Misterio Jr., Kevin Nash.

Nov. 1997: 10-Year Grudge! Lex Luger's Career Ruined By J.J. Dillon? Also: Shawn-Bret, Jeff Jarrett, H--unter Hearst Helmsley, Dreamer-Raven, Dan Severn.

Hol. 1997: First Owen ... Then 'Taker ... Then Hogan: Who's Gonna Go Next? Also: Steve Austin, Bret Hart, Lex Luger, Ric Flair, Dean Malenko.

April 1998: "We've Won!" Maybe ... But Can The NWO Handle Its Own Success? Also: Ken Shamrock, Steiners-Warriors, Douglas & Francine, Rocky Maivia.

June 1998: Hollywood Hogan: 10 More Dirty Deeds ... And Then He's Outta Here! Also: DeGeneration X, Jim Cornette, Randy Savage, yesterday and today.

July 1998: Death Wish! Costing Hogan The Title Isn't Enough For The Macho Man: What's Next? Also: Ric Flair, Headbangers-Rock 'n' Rolls, Chris Chetti, Mero & Sable.

Aug. 1998: We Stand Behind Ya, Vince! It's Time To Fire Austin. Also: Luna-Sable, Randy Savage, Dean Malenko, Super 8 tourney.

Sept. 1998 (Special Issue): WWF Midyear Report. Also: Nash-Hogan, Rocky Maivia, Bill Goldberg, Antonio Inoki.

Oct. 1998: The Mother Of All Pay-Per-Views! A WWF-WCW Supercard Is No Longer Just Talk! Also: Sable, Undertaker, Randy Savage, Sabu & Van Dam.

Nov. 1998: Demons Be Damned! Sting Makes The Giant See Red! Also: McMahon-Dude, Jarrett-Blackman, Melanie Pillman, Rey Misterio Jr.

Dec. 1998 (Special Issue): WWF vs. WCW: Top 10 Faceoff! Also: ECW midyear report, Ric Flair, Kane.

Hol. 1998: "Quit, Mick!" A Desperate Plea From A Distraught Wife. Also: Chris Jericho, Jason Sensation, wrestlers vs. celebrities, hardcore war.

Jan. 1999: Stone-Cold's Personal Survivor Series. Also: Rock-HHH, NWA, Bret Hart, Howard Finkel, three-way title matches.

Feb. 1999: Hot Rocks! The Anger That Drives Shamrock & The Rock. Also: McMahon-Austin, Spike Dudley, Eric Bischoff, Perry Saturn.

April 1999: Hogan's Retirement: White House Or White Lie? Also: DDP-Hart, Taz-Douglas, Steve Austin, Mankind.

May 1999: Team Coverage: The NWO Reunion! Also: Kane-McMahon, Dallas Page, Funk-Abdullah, WWF sideshow.

June 1999 (Special Issue): Ric Flair: The 10 Feats He Must Accomplish Before He's Through. Also: Rocky Maivia, Juventud Guerrera, Billy Gunn, body parts quiz section.

July 1999: Our Bottom Line ... It's High Time Austin Shows McMahon Respect! Also: Jerry Lawler, Rey Misterio Jr., Ken Shamrock, DDP-Bigelow-Goldberg.

Aug. 1999: This Man Is Pure Evil! Trust Hogan And He'll Take You To Hell! Plus: Owen Hart, Vader, Sable.

Sept. 1999 (Special Issue): WWF Midyear Report. Also: DDP-Sting, Douglas-Credible, Big Show-McMahons, Disco Inferno, Keirn & Lane.

Oct. 1999: Shawn Michaels' Game Of Corporate Chess! Are The McMahons His Pawns? Also: Steiners, Billy Gunn, Savage & George.

Nov. 1999: Austin's New Powers: Shag Vince? Yeah, Baby! Also: Arn-Sid, Hardy Boys, Ernest Miller, Naoya Ogawa.

Hol. 1999: Before The WWF Can Sell ... Read What They Had To Tell! Also: Kanyon, Big Show, Spike & Mahoney-Axl & New Jack, Kevin Nash.

Feb. 2000: When Will Mankind Finally Tell The Rock ... "Put A Sock In It"? Also: Goldberg, Chris Jericho, Sabu, Harlem Heat.

Apr. 2000: Can The WWF Survive Without Steve Austin? Also: Dawn Marie-Francine, Meng, Big Show, Madusa.

May 2000: StePHONY: The Most Mistrusted McMahon Of All! Also: Harlem Heat & Midnight, David & Ric Flair, Kurt Angle, Rhino.

June 2000 (Special Issue): The Rock: No. 1 On The Jabroni Hit List! Also: Awesome-Van Dam, Kurt Angle, Vampiro, federation jumpers, book of lists.

July 2000: Tori/Torrie, What's The Story? How They Rank In 10 Crucial Categories. Also: Big Show, Tank Abbott, Too Cool, Rhodes-Dreamer, Jeff Jarrett.

Aug. 2000: We're Con-Vinced! This Attack Saved The WWF! Also: Lex Luger, Radicals, Sandman & Rhino, Cyrus.

Sept. 2000 (Special Issue): WWF Mid-Year Report. Also: Mike Awesome, Nova & Chetti, Paul Wight, Chyna, Dr. Sam Sheppard.

Oct. 2000: Is Chyna Robbing Eddie Of His Latino Heat? Also: Abbott-Steiner, Scotty Too Hotty, Rob Van Dam, David Flair.

Nov. 2000: Special Fear Issue—Rock-Benoit, Ric Flair, HBK. Also: ECW mid-year report, Bill Goldberg.

Dec. 2000 (Special Issue): WWF vs. WCW: Top 10 Faceoff! Also: Goldberg-Triple-H, Daffney, Christian & Edge, Jeff Peterson. (ALL-COLOR BEGINNING WITH THE JANUARY 2001 ISSUE)

Jan. 2001: WWF Brat-titude! Does Steph Always Get Her Way? Not On Your Life! Also: Lance Storm, Mick Foley, Goldberg, Steve Corino, Steve Blackman, Torrie Wilson.

March 2001: Triple-H & The Rock: 10 Reasons They Should Trust Each Other ... 10 Reasons They Should Not! Also: Scott Steiner, Chris Candido, Rob Van Dam, McMahon-ECW, Steven Richards, WCW factions.

May 2001: Do Anything You Want, Stone-Cold: We Can't Hate You. Also: Kronic, Rikishi, Steve Corino, Goldberg, Edge & Christian, Kane.

July 2001: Jerichoholics Beware! Serious Withdrawal Symptoms Are In Store! Also: Tajiri, Steph-Test, Undertaker, Mike Awesome, WCW Elite, Albert.

Sept. 2001: The Rock's Choice: Honor Over Glory! Also: WrestleMania X-Seven, Undertaker-Triple-H, Shane-WCW, TCL II, Scott Hall, Vince McMahon, Chris Jericho.

Nov. 2001: Goldberg! Da Man Who Could Make Or Break Wrestling! Also: Dudleys, Steve Corino, Chris Benoit, Dusty Rhodes, Lita, WWF top tier.

Jan. 2002: Can The Rock Handle The Unrelenting Pressure Of Fame? Also: RVD, Paul Heyman, Terry Gordy, Flash-Jericho, Tajiri-Tazz, WWF-Alliance

March 2002: Outsiders Looking In! Hall & Nash Take Aim At The WWF! Also: Ivory, Austin-Angle, Christian-Edge, what's ahead in '02.

May 2002: Ric Flair: 10 Reasons He Terrifies Vince McMahon. Also: Undertaker, Jeff Hardy, Survivor Series, S.A.T., report cards.

July 2002: Hail The NWO ... But Don't Forget The N-W-Woes! Also: Edge, Billy & Chuck, Leviathon, Jericho-Flair, Goldust.

Sept. 2002: What's Left? Hulk Hogan's Five Remaining Tasks. Also: Steve Austin, Kurt Angle, Rey Misterio Jr., Jeff Peterson, WWF draft.

Nov. 2002: Who's Next? The Stars That Could Replace Stone-Cold. Also: Torrie Wilson, Davey Boy Smith, Ken Shamrock, Funk-Abdullah-Rhodes-Sullivan, WWE shockers, indy roulette.

Jan. 2003: War Games! WWE Is Out Of Control ... And Vinnie Mac Loves It! Also: Rey Misterio Jr., A.J. Styles, Rikishi-Gangrel, The Rock, Christian.

March 2003: The WrestleMania XIX We Want To See! Also: Terry Funk, Rey Misterio Jr., Nidia, NWA-TNA, what's ahead in '03.

May 2003: A Permanent Replacement For The Rock? Book It! Also: Smackdown, Joanie & Syxx-Pac, Raw report cards, Shawn Michaels, Victoria.

July 2003: In Tune With Steve Austin—A Comprehensive Guide To Stone-Cold's Red-Hot Comeback. Also: Kurt Angle, Amazing Red, The Sheik, Bill DeMott, Al Snow, Ric Flair.

Sept. 2003: Goldberg's Golden Road To WWE. Also: Hardys, Chance Beckett, Kevin Nash, WrestleMania "B" card, *Playboy*-WWE.

Nov. 2003: The Women Of Wrestling—Do We Expect Too Much From Their Bodies? Also: A.J. Styles, Freddie Blassie, Goldberg, Stacy Keibler, evolution of wrestling.

Jan. 2004: No Fear! Ask Angle ... He's Never Been Hurt A Day In His Life! Also: Punk-Raven, Orton-Guerrero-Rock, TNA vs. WWE, Mankind, Hall of Fame.

March 2004: McMahon vs. McWoman: How Vince vs. Stephanie Nearly Ruined WWE! Also: Flair & Dusty, Eric Angle, Jeff Jarrett, Shannon Moore, what's ahead in '04.

May 2004: Who's Got The Edge? The Inside Story Of The Raw-Smackdown Bidding War! Also: Bret Hart, Sumie Sakai, Steiner-Stacy, Smackdown report cards.

July 2004: Stop Right There! RVD Won't Let The Young Studs Pass Him By! Also: Jonny Fairplay, Walters-Xavier, HHH-HBK.

Oct. 2004: Austin, Lesnar, Goldberg: We Know Who'll Be Back First. Also: A.J. Styles, Eugene, Rene Dupree, mid-year report.

Jan. 2005: Evolving Beyond Evolution: It's Time For Randy Orton To Be A Man! Also: Rey Misterio Jr., Kane-Lita, Ron Killings, La Resistance, Eugene-Helmsley, Trish-Victoria, Kurt Angle, WWE mid-carders.

April 2005: PPV Revolution: How Taboo Tuesday & Victory Road Changed Wrestling Forever. Also: Eddie Guerrero, Jushin Liger, Edge-Benoit, Kane-Snitsky, TNA vs. ROH, Heyman & Heidenreich, Charlie Haas, WWE pink slips.

June 2005: Chokehold On America: Have Hassan & Daivari Put Us In A No-Win Situation? Also: Sabu, Edge, Shelton Benjamin, ECW, report cards.

Oct. 2005: Big Fish Trish: Will She Drown In Her Little Pond? Also: Guerrero & Misterio, Matt Hardy, Batista, mid-year report.

Dec. 2005: Brand New Mattitude! But Will Hardy's Rage Consume His Career? Also: Abyss, WWE cuts, Shelton Benjamin, Chris Masters, book of bad.

the Wrestler

Please send me the back issues I have checked off. I have enclosed $5 for each issue (plus $2 each for postage and handling) as payment in full or provided my credit card number to charge my purchase.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____ Email _____

Send To:
SPORTS & ENTERTAINMENT PUBLICATIONS LLC, P.O. BOX 910, FT. WASHINGTON, PA 19034

Please indicate method of payment:

☐ Check or money order
(enclosed and payable to Sports & Entertainment Publications, LLC)

☐ VISA # _____

☐ MasterCard # _____

Expiration Date: ___/___
MO YR

3 DIGIT SECURITY CODE

Signature: _____

For Canadian and Mexican orders, the postage and handling charge is $3 per issue (airmail). For all other countries, the postage and handling charge is $7.50 per issue (airmail). Int'l money order in U.S. funds only. Please allow 6-8 weeks for delivery.

Send To: SPORTS & ENTERTAINMENT PUBLICATIONS, LLC BOX 910, FT. WASHINGTON, PA 19034

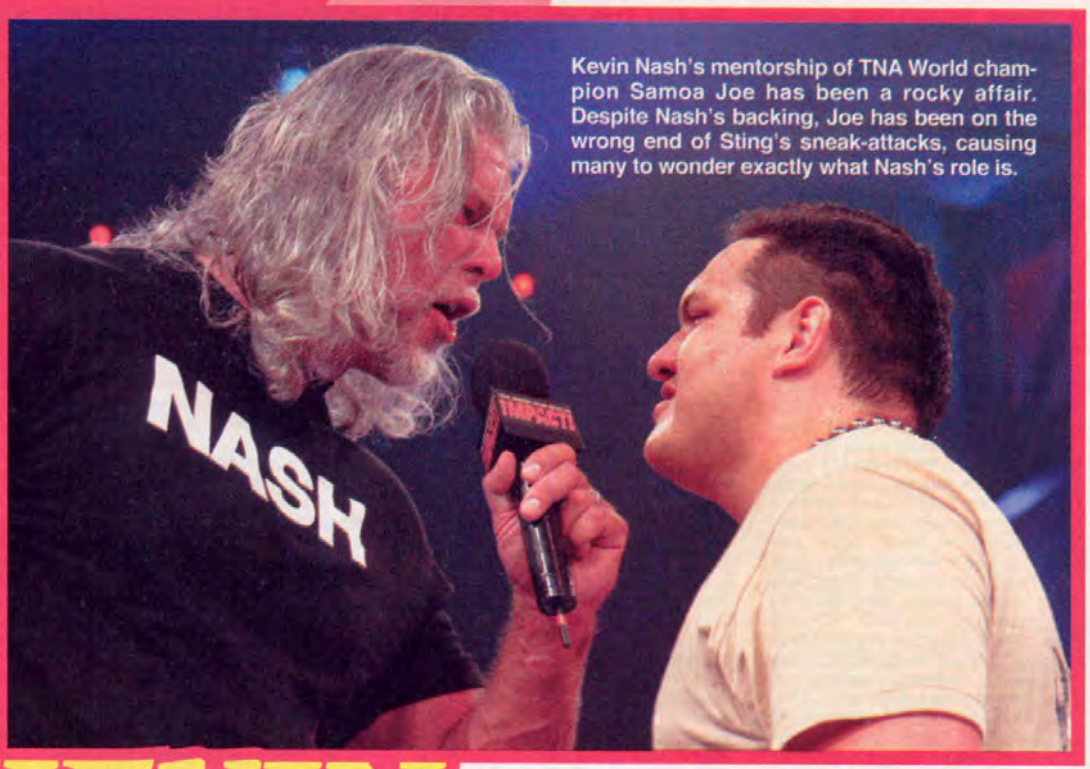
ONLY $5 EACH!
(Plus Postage & Handling)

☐ JUL 82	☐ JAN 88	☐ FEB 91	☐ MAR 93	☐ JUN 98	☐ MAY 00	☐ MAR 03
☐ SEP 83	☐ FEB 88	☐ MAR 91	☐ APR 93	☐ JUL 98	☐ JUN 00	☐ MAY 03
☐ JUL 84	☐ MAR 88	☐ APR 91	☐ MAY 93	☐ AUG 98	☐ JUL 00	☐ JUL 03
☐ AUG 84	☐ MAY 88	☐ MAY 91	☐ NOV 93	☐ SEP 98	☐ AUG 00	☐ SEP 03
☐ NOV 84	☐ JUN 88	☐ JUN 91	☐ MAY 94	☐ OCT 98	☐ SEP 00	☐ NOV 03
☐ DEC 84	☐ OCT 88	☐ JUL 91	☐ JUL 94	☐ NOV 98	☐ OCT 00	☐ JAN 04
☐ FEB 85	☐ JAN 89	☐ AUG 91	☐ AUG 94	☐ DEC 98	☐ NOV 00	☐ MAR 04
☐ MAY 85	☐ MAR 89	☐ NOV 91	☐ SEP 94	☐ HOL 98	☐ DEC 00	☐ MAY 04
☐ JUN 85	☐ MAY 89	☐ JAN 92	☐ JAN 95	☐ JAN 99	☐ JAN 01	☐ JUL 04
☐ AUG 85	☐ JUN 89	☐ FEB 92	☐ APR 95	☐ FEB 99	☐ MAR 01	☐ OCT 04
☐ JUN 86	☐ JUL 89	☐ MAR 92	☐ JUN 95	☐ APR 99	☐ MAY 01	☐ JAN 05
☐ JUL 86	☐ AUG 89	☐ APR 92	☐ JUL 95	☐ MAY 99	☐ JUL 01	☐ APR 05
☐ NOV 86	☐ OCT 89	☐ JUN 92	☐ OCT 95	☐ JUN 99	☐ SEP 01	☐ JUN 05
☐ DEC 86	☐ JAN 90	☐ JUL 92	☐ WIN 95	☐ JUL 99	☐ NOV 01	☐ OCT 05
☐ JAN 87	☐ MAR 90	☐ AUG 92	☐ NOV 96	☐ AUG 99	☐ JAN 02	☐ DEC 05
☐ FEB 87	☐ APR 90	☐ SEP 92	☐ JAN 97	☐ SEP 99	☐ MAR 02	
☐ MAR 87	☐ JUL 90	☐ OCT 92	☐ FEB 97	☐ OCT 99	☐ MAY 02	
☐ JUN 87	☐ AUG 90	☐ NOV 92	☐ NOV 97	☐ NOV 99	☐ JUL 02	
☐ SEP 87	☐ SEP 90	☐ DEC 92	☐ HOL 97	☐ HOL 99	☐ SEP 02	
☐ OCT 87	☐ OCT 90	☐ JAN 93	☐ MAR 98	☐ FEB 00	☐ NOV 02	
☐ DEC 87	☐ DEC 90	☐ FEB 93	☐ APR 98	☐ APR 00	☐ JAN 03	

Substitute choice _____

7786/10-07

press conference...



Kevin Nash's mentorship of TNA World champion Samoa Joe has been a rocky affair. Despite Nash's backing, Joe has been on the wrong end of Sting's sneak-attacks, causing many to wonder exactly what Nash's role is.

KEVIN NASH

PHOTOS BY **LEE SOUTH/TNA WRESTLING**

IN NEARLY TWO decades in the wrestling business, Kevin Nash has always marched to the beat of his own drummer. The 6'11" former WWF and WCW World champion, one-time professional basketball player, and part-time actor has never shied away from controversy. At times, he even seems to relish it.

The former "Big Daddy Cool," Diesel, and mainstay in the NWO has long been among the most strong-willed and outspoken wrestlers in the business. But he also has a fun-loving side. Nash is known for having a wickedly tongue-in-cheek sense of humor, and a willingness to poke fun at himself as well as others.

Nash has aligned himself with TNA World champion Samoa Joe, although Nash's motivations in serving as Joe's adviser have sometimes seemed to be less than altruistic. Strange things keep happening to—and around—Joe, Booker T, and Sting. Yet despite the curious circumstances, Nash insists Joe has benefited from his unorthodox tutelage.

Sometimes called "The Silver Fox" for his graying hair and wily personality (Nash has always preferred "Big Sexy"), the 49-year-old veteran says he has no plans to slow down anytime soon.

Nash recently granted an interview to Editor-in-Chief Lisa Rocchi-Doyle and Contributing Writers Matt Brock and Bill Meltzer. In characteristic fashion, he tossed caustic verbal darts here, there, and everywhere, but also revealed his more serious side.

Every issue, reporters from PRO WRESTLING ILLUSTRATED will participate in an incisive press conference with a top wrestling star. The questions will be demanding. And the answers will reveal the innermost thoughts of the giants of the sport.

LISA ROCCHI-DOYLE: Thanks for agreeing to be interviewed, Kevin. It's been a while since we've spoken to you.

KEVIN NASH: Whoa, whoa ... first things first. Last time I saw Brock, he bet me that I'd retire before Flair. Pay up, Matt.

MATT BROCK: I don't recall any such bet.

NASH: You've got a mind like a steel sieve ...

BROCK: I've forgotten more than you'll ever know.

NASH: At your age, I'm sure you have!

BROCK: Actually, you should be paying me. Watching you the last few years, I could have sworn you'd already retired.

ROCCHI-DOYLE: Matt! Cut it out.

BROCK: Relax, would ya? He knows I'm just kidding. As much as I hate to say it, Nash has been a lot of fun to watch ever since he came to TNA.

NASH: Yeah, yeah. I still want my money. Tell ya what; we'll call the bet even. I've had you in my Dead Pool 12 years running, and you keep surprising me.

ROCCHI-DOYLE: Guys, can we get this interview started, please?

NASH: Go ahead.

BILL MELTZER: Over the course of your time with TNA, you've seemed to be a lot more content in playing a sideline role at times and not always being the main focus of storylines. Would you agree with that assessment?

NASH: TNA has been a good fit for me. The roster has some tremendous talent and gets deeper all the time, and the whole atmosphere around TNA matches my personality.

ROCCHI-DOYLE: A lot of fans have been wondering about your mentorship of Samoa Joe. Here's a guy who seemed to be doing well on his own, and your respective styles in the ring are very different. Do you think he's benefited?

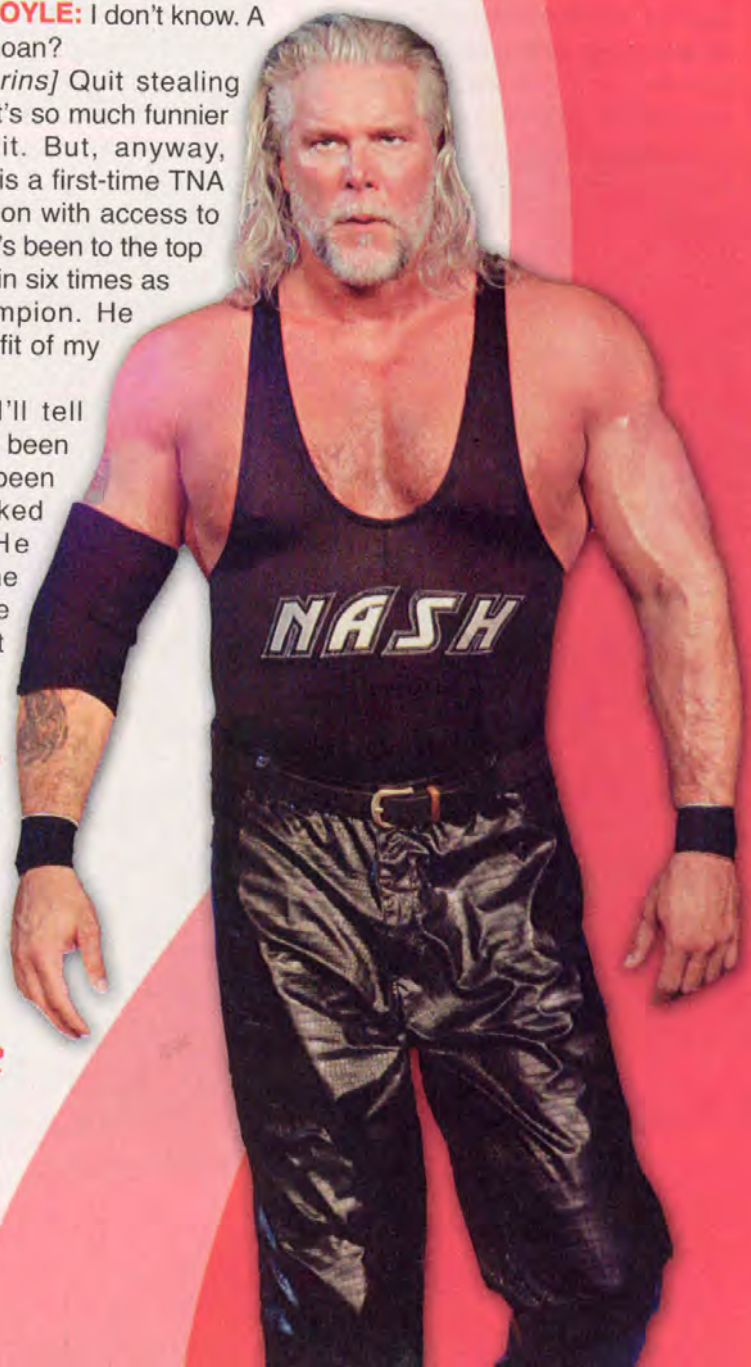
NASH: Take a look at the man. He was already one of the baddest dudes around. But there's always more to learn. Add to Joe's natural toughness all the things "Big Sexy" can show him and what do you get?

ROCCHI-DOYLE: I don't know. A big, sexy Samoan?

NASH: *[Grins]* Quit stealing my material. It's so much funnier when I say it. But, anyway, what you get is a first-time TNA World champion with access to someone who's been to the top of the mountain six times as a world champion. He gets the benefit of my wisdom.

BROCK: I'll tell you what he's been getting. He's been getting knocked out cold. He used to be the one doing the damage, not receiving it. Before that,

"If I didn't think I can still be the man in this company, I'd retire. But am I consumed by the championship? No."



you tied yourself to Kurt Angle, and he drops the belt. Now you're with Joe and he seems vulnerable. Sting is nowhere to be seen, but all the sudden, he appears to be aiding the sort of people he's always fought against. I don't know, Nash. With your history, I'm suspicious.

NASH: Huh? I didn't understand a word of that. Are you trying to imply that I'm setting Joe up here? I'm setting Sting up? C'mon. Would I ever do something like that? Well, yeah, I might. But that just is not the case this time.

MELTZER: The fact remains that you've clashed with Sting many times in the past, and it wasn't all that long ago that you and Joe were on opposite sides of the fence. Other than your mutual problems with Kurt Angle, why the sudden change of heart?

NASH: That's the way it goes in this business. Alliances shift all the time. As for Sting, well, he's always been a pretty weird dude.

ROCCHI-DOYLE: You haven't won a major title yet in TNA, and at your age, time may be running out. Is it your goal to get into the World championship picture again, or is your alliance with Samoa Joe the extent of your interest in the belt?

NASH: Am I going to turn down another title shot if the opportunity comes up? No. If I didn't think I could still be the man in this company, I'd retire. But am I consumed by the championship? No. Am I losing sleep at night because the belt isn't around my waist? No, because I've had that before. If I never win another championship, I'm more than happy with my career. I don't need three dozen championships like Triple-H does *[laughs]*.

MELTZER: Speaking of Triple-H, you've always been very open about the fact that despite working in different companies now, you've maintained your friendship with guys like him and Shawn Michaels. Are you still in touch?

NASH: Yeah, when the schedule permits.

MELTZER: I've always wondered, when you talk with your old wrestling friends, do you talk about the wrestling business or do you consciously steer away from it?

NASH: That's a really stupid question, man. Sorry. You wanna know what we talk about? We talk about the price of gas.

BROCK: Diesel?

NASH: *[Rolls his eyes] Ugh*, that's just brutal. Go back to sleep, Brock. My point was that we talk about the same kinds of things anyone does with their friends. We just catch up, and talk about whatever.

ROCCHI-DOYLE: We haven't talked much about Booker T. I'd like to get your views on him, both as a challenger to Samoa Joe and what his addition means to TNA.

NASH: I've got to be totally honest with you. I don't like some of the things Booker and Sharmell have done lately, but I still got a lot of respect for that guy. He's so dedicated to what he does, and if you look at where he came from in life, and where he's come to, you don't have to like him but you have to respect him. In terms of him being a title threat, of course he is. But as long as I've got Joe's back and keep things balanced, I like my guy's chances of turning back Booker's challenge.

MELTZER: That's some pretty high

Although Booker T and Sharmell are aligned against Samoa Joe, Kevin Nash has nothing but respect for Booker's accomplishments in the ring. Although he may not care for the emerging TNA power couple, Nash acknowledges their gravitas in TNA.

thing. I've traveled the same road many of the younger guys have. I've worked and headlined for the biggest wrestling organizations in the world. I've been in the game nearly 20 years and I haven't had just an average career. If I can impart some of what I've picked up over the years to TNA's up-and-comers, I'll have done my part to help build the brand.

MELTZER: Well said. Thanks for your time.

NASH: No problem. It's always good to talk with you, guys—even you, Brock. □

Nash and Sting have a history between them that dates back to WCW in the mid-1990s (above). Their rivalry resumed in TNA (right), and then cooled again. These days, Nash and Sting are connected through a strange association with Samoa Joe.

praise for Booker. Given the fact you and Joe are embroiled in a feud with Booker and Sharmell, I expected you to say something like Booker needs to control his woman or you'll do it for him.

NASH: Really? I think you've been watching too many old Scotty Steiner promos, which is a pretty scary thought. You need help, man. No, but seriously, I've got to call it like I see it, and Booker has earned respect. You don't have to like someone to respect him. That's also why it was so easy to kind of mend the fences with Joe after Angle turned on me. I've always respected Joe.

ROCCHI-DOYLE: At this stage of your career, what do you see as the most valuable thing you can bring to TNA?

NASH: You mean aside from my sex appeal? Obviously my experience would be the biggest

>WRESTLING COLLECTORS!

Do you know what you're missing?

PWI INTERVIEW SPECIAL (Vol. I)
One select "Press Conference" since 1979, *PWI's* first year. Scott Hall, Bruno Sammartino, Dallas Page, Kevin Von Erich, Ric Flair, and more! 32 color pinups!

PWI INTERVIEW SPECIAL (Vol. II)
One "Press Conference" for each year since 1980, including Hogan, Andre, Cactus, Austin, Sting, and more! 32 color pinups!

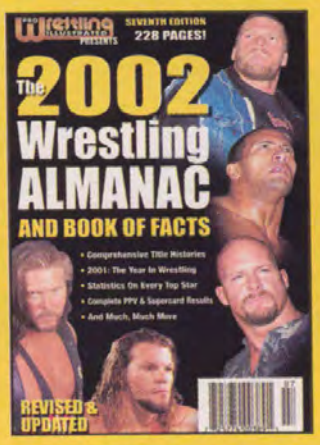
SPECIAL COLLECTOR'S EDITION!
Wrestler Presents The Wrestling INSIDERS
SPANNING A QUARTER-CENTURY!
35 Memorable Editorials!
THE BEST IN WRESTLING JOURNALISM!
By The Sport's Most Respected Writers
Our Controversial Views On ...

WRESTLING INSIDERS (Winter '99)
Go back through the years with wrestling's most respected columnists, including Dan Shocket, Eddie Ellner, and Stu Saks.

PWI INTERVIEW SPECIAL (Vol. III)
One "Press Conference" for each year since 1980, including Michaels, Sting, Flair, Ventura, Kimberly, Blassie, Luger, and more! 32 color pinups!

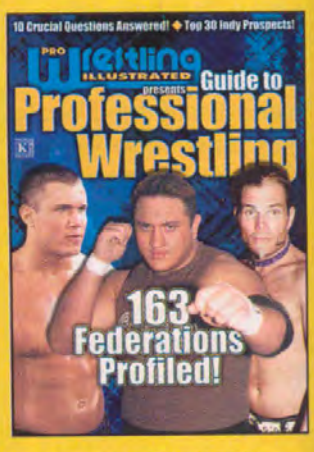
Wrestler Presents The Wrestling INSIDERS
SPANNING A QUARTER-CENTURY!
EDITOR'S CHOICE!
OUR MOST MEMORABLE COLUMNS EVER!
More Than 30 Classic Editorials By The Sport's Top Writers

WRESTLING INSIDERS (Fall 2000)
Titles, holds and maneuvers, supercards, tag teams, hall of famers, the state of the game. You want our opinion? Buy the magazine!

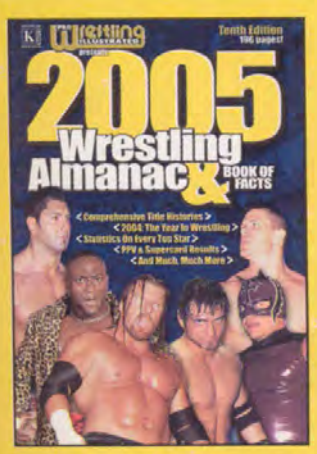

Wrestling Illustrated Presents
SEVENTH EDITION
228 PAGES!
The 2002 Wrestling ALMANAC AND BOOK OF FACTS
• Comprehensive Title Histories
• 2001: The Year In Wrestling
• Statistics On Every Top Star
• Complete PPV & Supercard Results
• And Much, Much More
REVISED & UPDATED

2002 WRESTLING ALMANAC
The seventh annual edition updates our historical records and takes a look back at the year 2001.

2003 PWI 500 (Fall 2003)
At 180 pages, our most in-depth look at the top wrestlers in the sport. Contains a comprehensive listing of the more than 2,000 wrestlers who have been ranked in the "500" since 1991.

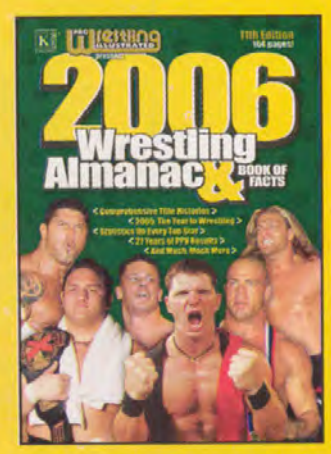

10 Crucial Questions Answered! ◆ Top 30 Indy Prospects!
Pro Wrestling Illustrated presents Guide to Professional Wrestling
163 Federations Profiled!

***PWI* GUIDE TO PRO WRESTLING (2004)**
More than 160 pro wrestling federations profiled, 10 crucial questions for 2005, top 30 prospects. Digest format.



2005 WRESTLING ALMANAC
A review of the biggest stories of 2004, plus title chronology and PPV result updates, and more.

PWI WRESTLING YEARBOOK (FALL 2005)
Insider scouting reports on 50 stars, color pin-ups galore. 164 pages.

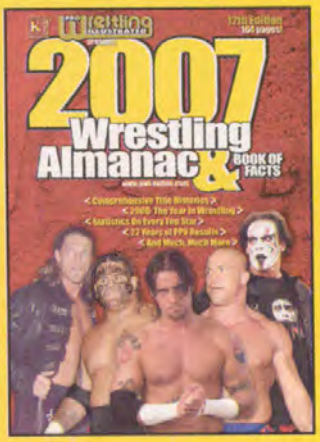


2006 WRESTLING ALMANAC
Pay-per-view and title lineage updates, a look back at the top stories of 2005, plus much more.

WE HAVE LIMITED REMAINING SUPPLIES ON SOME OF THE MOST POPULAR ISSUES LONDON PUBLISHING HAS EVER PRODUCED!

ORDER NOW— BEFORE THEY'RE ALL GONE!

REPORT CARDS OF THE STARS (October 2006)
Grading the top 50 stars in the sport today. 164 pages.



2007 WRESTLING ALMANAC
2006 in review, plus pay-per-view rundown, title histories, and much more.

REPORT CARDS OF THE STARS (October 2007)
Grading the top 50 stars in the sport today. 164 pages.

REPORT CARDS OF THE STARS (July 2008)
Grading the top 50 stars in the sport today. 164 pages.

COLLECTOR'S ISSUES

- ☐ PWI Interview Special (Vol. I)
- ☐ PWI Interview Special (Vol. II)
- ☐ 1999 Wrestling Insiders (Winter '99)
- ☐ PWI Interview Special (Vol. III)
- ☐ Wrestling Insiders (Fall 2000)
- ☐ 2002 Wrestling Almanac
- ☐ 2003 Wrestling Almanac
- ☐ PWI Guide To Pro Wrestling (2004)
- ☐ 2005 Wrestling Almanac
- ☐ PWI Guide To Pro Wrestling (Vol. 2, 2005)
- ☐ PWI Wrestling Yearbook (Fall 2005)
- ☐ 2006 Wrestling Almanac
- ☐ Report Cards Of The Stars (October 2006)
- ☐ 2007 Wrestling Almanac
- ☐ Report Cards Of The Stars (October 2007)
- ☐ Report Cards Of The Stars (July 2008)

Please send the collector's issues I have indicated below! I have enclosed $7 per issue (plus $2 each for postage and handling per issue) as payment in full or provided my credit card number to charge my purchase.

Send to: Sports & Entertainment Publications LLC
P.O. Box 910, Ft. Washington, PA 19034

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ **State** _____ **Zip** _____

Please indicate method of payment:

☐ Check or money order
(enclosed and payable to Sports & Entertainment Publications LLC)

☐ Visa # _____

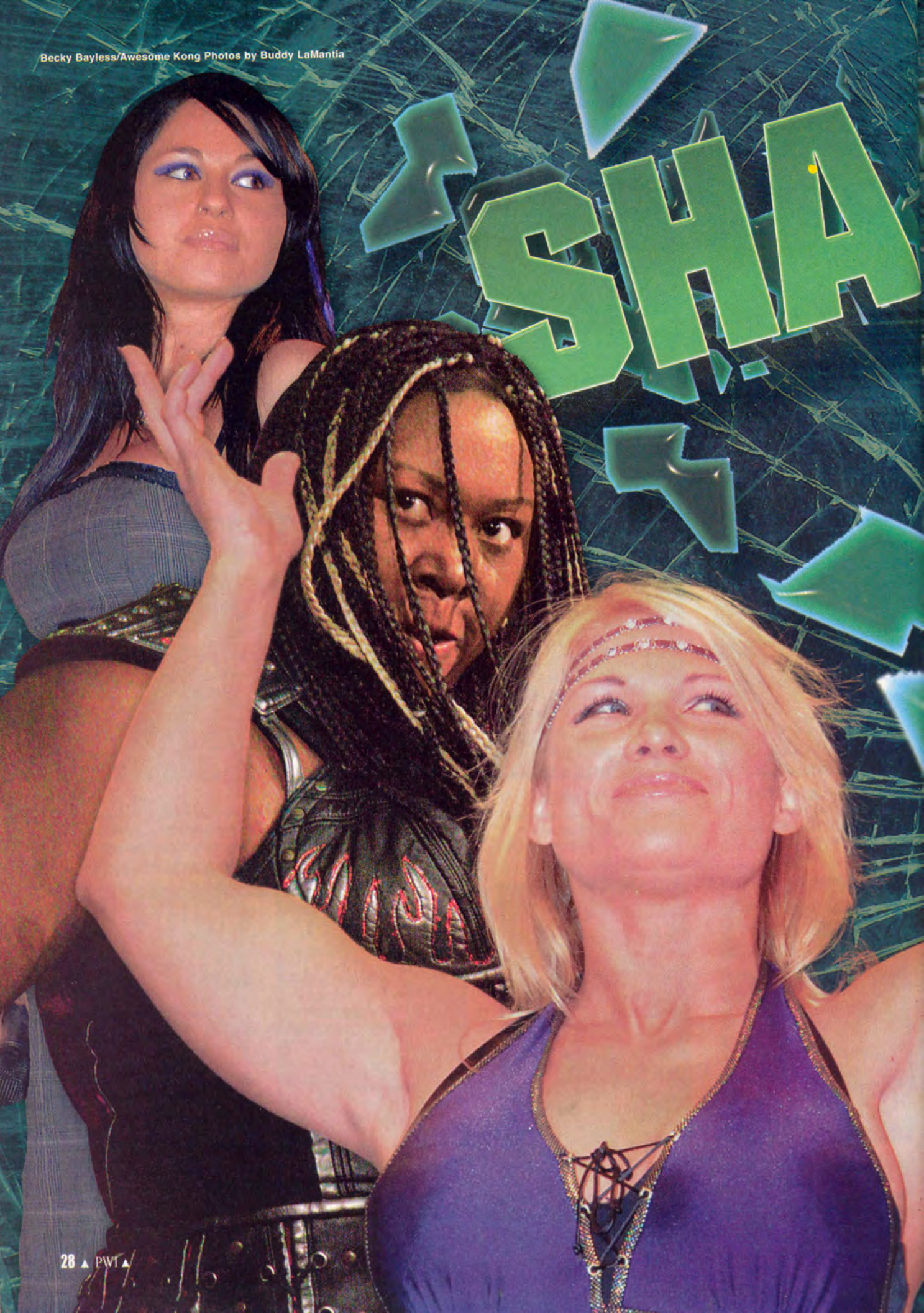
☐ MasterCard # _____

Expiration Date: ____/____ (MO / YR) ____ ____ ____ (3 DIGIT SECURITY CODE)

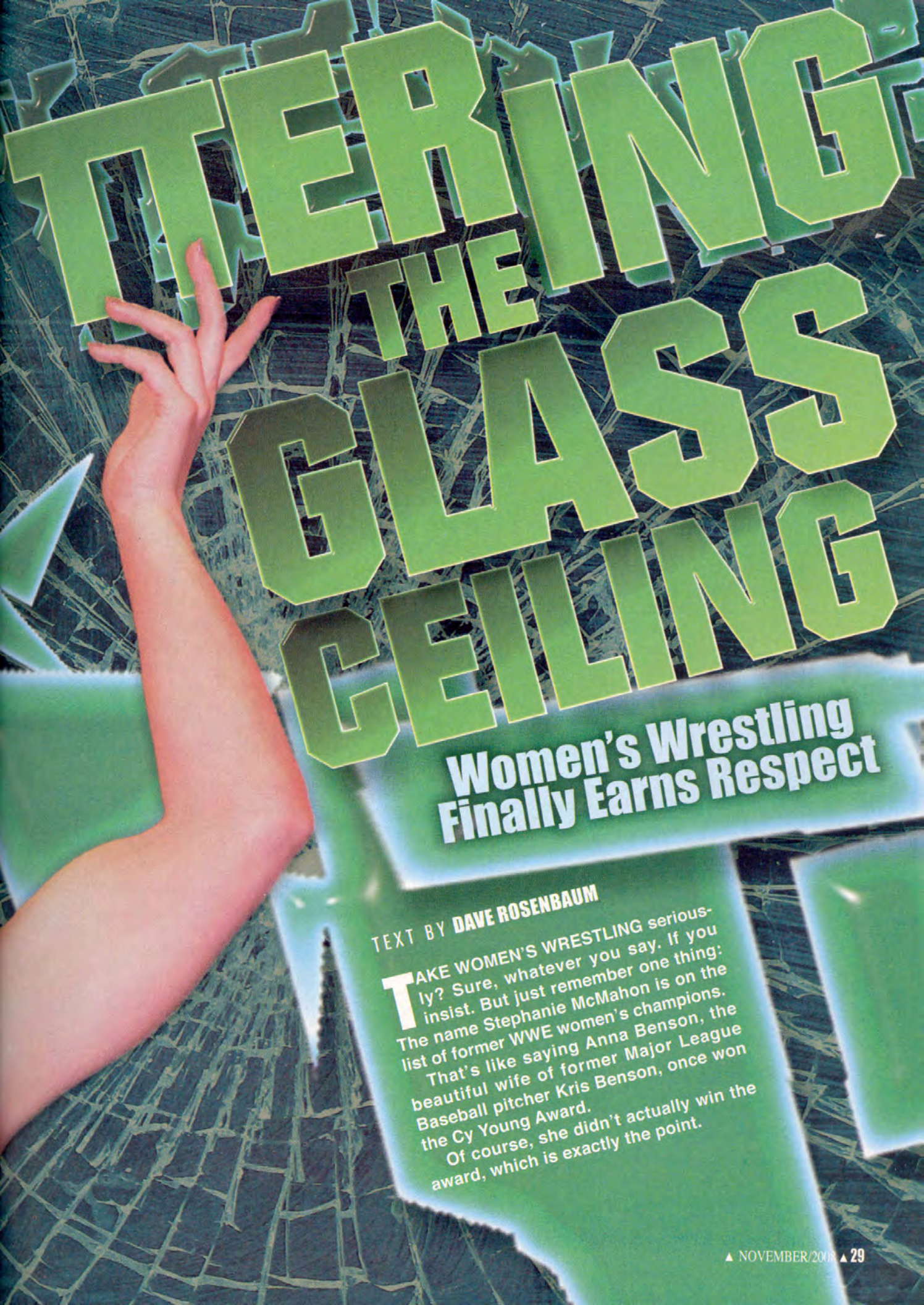
Signature: _____

For Canadian and Mexican orders, the postage and handling charge is $3 per issue (airmail). For all other countries, the postage and handling charge is $7.50 per issue (airmail). Int'l money order in U.S. funds only. Please allow 6-8 weeks for delivery.

7606/06.08



Becky Bayless/Awesome Kong Photos by Buddy LaMantia



SHATTERING THE GLASS CEILING

Women's Wrestling Finally Earns Respect

TEXT BY **DAVE ROSENBAUM**

TAKE WOMEN'S WRESTLING seriously? Sure, whatever you say. If you insist. But just remember one thing: The name Stephanie McMahon is on the list of former WWE women's champions. That's like saying Anna Benson, the beautiful wife of former Major League Baseball pitcher Kris Benson, once won the Cy Young Award.

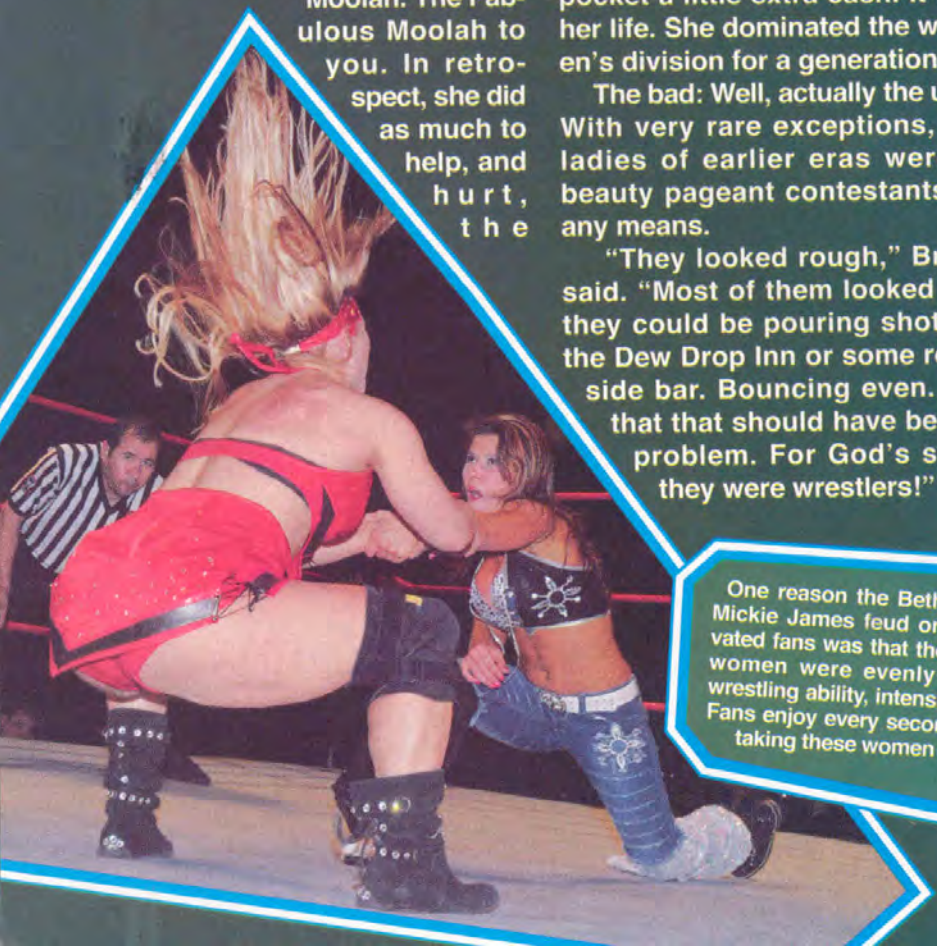
Of course, she didn't actually win the award, which is exactly the point.

But the name Stephanie McMahon is there, way back in 2000, forever etched into the annals of WWE history, and it is a permanent blemish on the title.

A blemish, however, that may soon be overlookable. As we enter 2009, something unprecedented is happening in women's wrestling. For the first time ever, beauty and talent are coming together in a way never seen before. Incredibly, just a matter of years after women's wrestling had gone as low as it could go, it is now entering what could be considered a Golden Era—and finally earning some respect. It's been a long time coming.

"Women's wrestling has always had a sideshow aspect to it," long-time PRO WRESTLING ILLUSTRATED Senior Writer Matt Brock said. "Even in the '50s, '60s, and '70s, when women's wrestling was in its heyday, you'd rarely see the girls for more than one match on a card, if that much. In fact, women's wrestling was banned at Madison Square Garden until 1972, when Moolah wrestled there for the first time."

Moolah. The Fabulous Moolah to you. In retrospect, she did as much to help, and hurt, the image of women's wrestling as any person in the sport's history.



One reason the Beth Phoenix-Mickie James feud on Raw captivated fans was that they knew both women were evenly matched in wrestling ability, intensity, and looks. Fans enjoy every second they spend taking these women seriously.

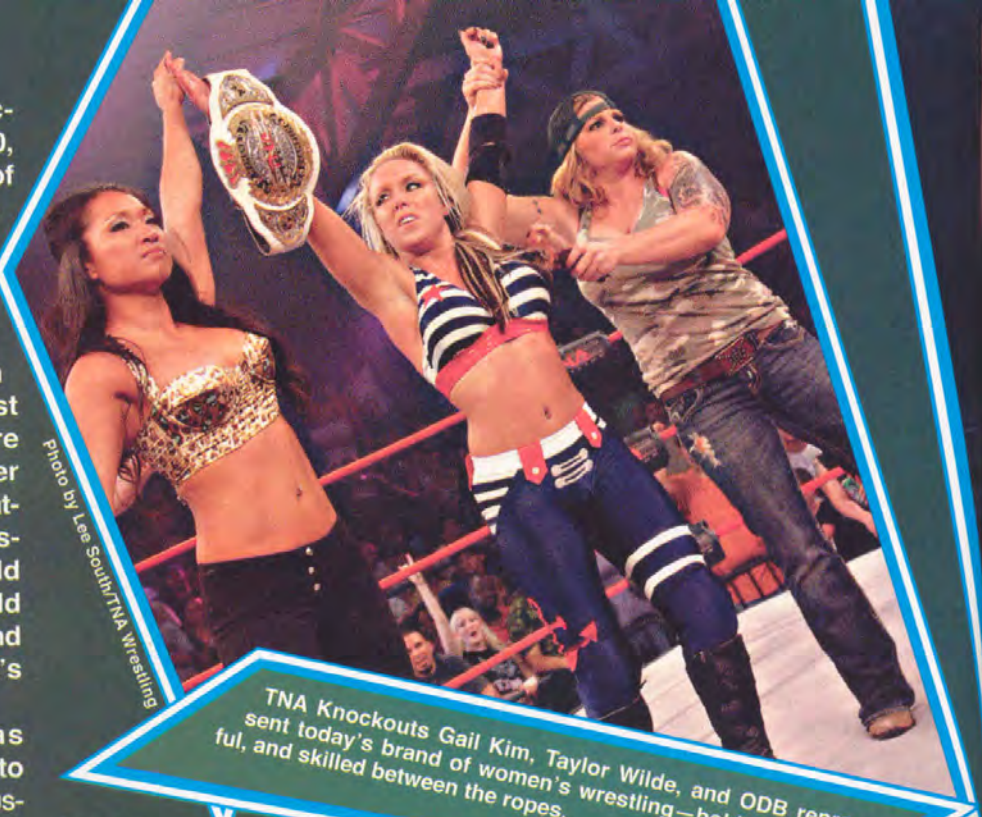


Photo by Lee South/TNA Wrestling

TNA Knockouts Gail Kim, Taylor Wilde, and ODB represent today's brand of women's wrestling—bold, beautiful, and skilled between the ropes.

The good: She could actually wrestle. She was a fierce competitor, "fiercer and meaner than some of the boys," as Brock recalled. "She took the sport seriously. It wasn't a way for her to pocket a little extra cash. It was her life. She dominated the women's division for a generation."

The bad: Well, actually the ugly. With very rare exceptions, the ladies of earlier eras weren't beauty pageant contestants by any means.

"They looked rough," Brock said. "Most of them looked like they could be pouring shots at the Dew Drop Inn or some roadside bar. Bouncing even. Not that that should have been a problem. For God's sake, they were wrestlers!"

Oh and did they ever dress the part, wearing unflattering one-piece wrestling outfits that could have passed for the gear you might find the grannies wearing at your public pool.

But as Moolah, who died in 2007, pointed out numerous times, "At least we were respected, and we brought respect to the sport. This wasn't Jell-O wrestling or Foxy Boxing. It was the real thing. We respected the sport and it respected us back."

Well, kind of. Women's matches were always low on the card and rarely main events. It seemed as if the only time a female wrestler got any kind of serious recognition was when she turned to managing a male wrestler, like Sherri Martel did with Randy Savage in the late-1980s.

Of course, then the 1990s came along and everything changed, at least in women's wrestling that is. It became more spectacle, less sport, and less serious.

In earlier times, lady wrestlers like The Fabulous Moolah and Joyce Grable (left) lacked the sex appeal to excite fans. Even worse, most promotions presented their matches as a sideshow to male competition. By the late-'90s, the pendulum had swung so far the other way, fans barely considered sexpots such as Leia Meow and Major Gunns (below) to be actual competitors.

More the kind of thing you might expect to find at your local strip club.

The girls got sexier.

The outfits got tinier.

The quality of wrestling went way down.

Sure, there were the rare exceptions, huge women like Bertha Faye and Bull Nakano who, not surprisingly, dominated their more-feminine, less-skilled competition. But even they gave way to Sable, Debra, Major Gunns, and, of course, Stacy Carter, who's claim to fame is that during the Armageddon pay-per-view telecast in December 1999, she flashed her breasts, thereby becoming the first person to intentionally get nude on a wrestling telecast.

The fans–male fans especially–loved it.

But women's wrestling had reached a low point. Remember G.L.O.W?

"You wanna know what I think?" Moolah once said. "It's an embarrassment. It's an embarrassment to the proud history of women's wrestling."

Then came the Divas, the eye candy, the ladies with little experience as wrestlers, the so-called athletes whose main purpose was to raise the titillation level of WWE broadcasts.

"I'm never one to fawn all over the Japanese," Brock said. "But that country has always held the gals in high regard. There's a long, respected history of ladies' wrestling in Japan. Not here in America."

Women's wrestling in the United States seemed incapable of striking a happy medium. The wrestlers either had to be unattractive and skilled or sexy and almost completely unskilled. And that really didn't make any sense.

After all, successful female athletes in many other sports are highly attractive. Sex objects, even. Look at Maria Sharapova and Anna Kournikova in tennis, Danica Patrick in auto racing, Brandy Chastain in soccer. And it stands to reason, doesn't it? To be successful, an athlete must be in outstanding physical condition. Well, Moolah and her ilk were not in outstanding physical condition. They were just big. The Divas were in outstanding physical condition, but couldn't wrestle.

Where was the happy medium?

Well, it's here! Finally.

Late in the first decade of the 21st century, women's professional wrestling in North America has arrived. Want proof of that?

This issue's theme: "*PWI* Female 50." Women's wrestling is finally worth taking seriously.

Take a look around. Just about every federation has several women who are both attractive and athletic.

There's Mickie James, Phoenix, Candice Michelle, Michelle McCool in WWE. Annie Social, Christi Ricci, and Cindy Rogers on the indy scene. Lacey and Sara Del Rey in SHIMMER and more are on the rise. As Christi Ricci pointed out, "The more young women who see women's wrestling as something to be taken seriously, not just a 'T-and-A' show, the better our sport will become."

And maybe, one day, we'll forget that Stephanie McMahon was once the WWE women's champion. □

©1228788 Alberta Ltd.

www.bloodngutz.com

Role • Play • Wrestling • Game • Roll • Play • Wrestling • Game

BLOOD GUTZ™

©1228788 AB LTD

Create Wrestlers... Challenge Friends...
Win Titles... Become a CHAMPION!

BLOOD'N'GUTZ™

Role Play Wrestling Game...For the True Fan!

Join us Online to win your Own Customized Championship Belt! This is not a cheap replica, but a Dave Millican Original. Dave Millican also creates Championship Gold for such organizations as UFC, WWE, TNA, ROH and many more.

Now Available, Full Impact MMA™

Will you be a One Punch Knockout Specialist?
or maybe you Prefer to make them Beg for Mercy?
Either way, you're here to Win! Get in the Cage and Prove Yourself!

FULL IMPACT MMA™

www.fullimpactmma.com

©1332623 Alberta Ltd.

THE PWI Female 50

SEVERAL TIMES OVER the past few years, the idea of doing a ranking of the top women in wrestling—sort of a female "*PWI* 500"—has been discussed by the editors and writers of *Pro Wrestling Illustrated*.

Now, with the TNA Knockouts division emerging as one of the most entertaining divisions in wrestling, with WWE instituting a second women's championship, and with all-women's league SHIMMER gaining momentum, it's an idea whose time has come.

The influence of women in wrestling simply cannot be denied. Women's wrestling isn't a fad; it's a new reality in this sport.

In acknowledgment of the larger role women are playing in wrestling, and to recognize some of the competitors who have helped build the art, science, and popularity of women's wrestling, we have created the "Female 50," a comprehensive rating of the top 50 women currently competing in the U.S. and Canada today.

Unlike the "*PWI* 500," we opted to exclude Mexican and Japanese wrestlers from this section. That isn't intended to be a slight against international competitors. More so than with their male counterparts, women's wrestling varies tremendously between the North American style, the Japanese *joshi* puroresu style, and the Mexican lucha libre style. With few notable exceptions (such as Sumie Sakai and Gail Kim), a wrestler who excels in one style may fare much more poorly in a different style. Besides, we wanted to shine the spotlight primarily on the U.S. and Canadian competitors first. If reader response to this special section is strong, perhaps we will consider ranking more women, including international competitors, in the future.

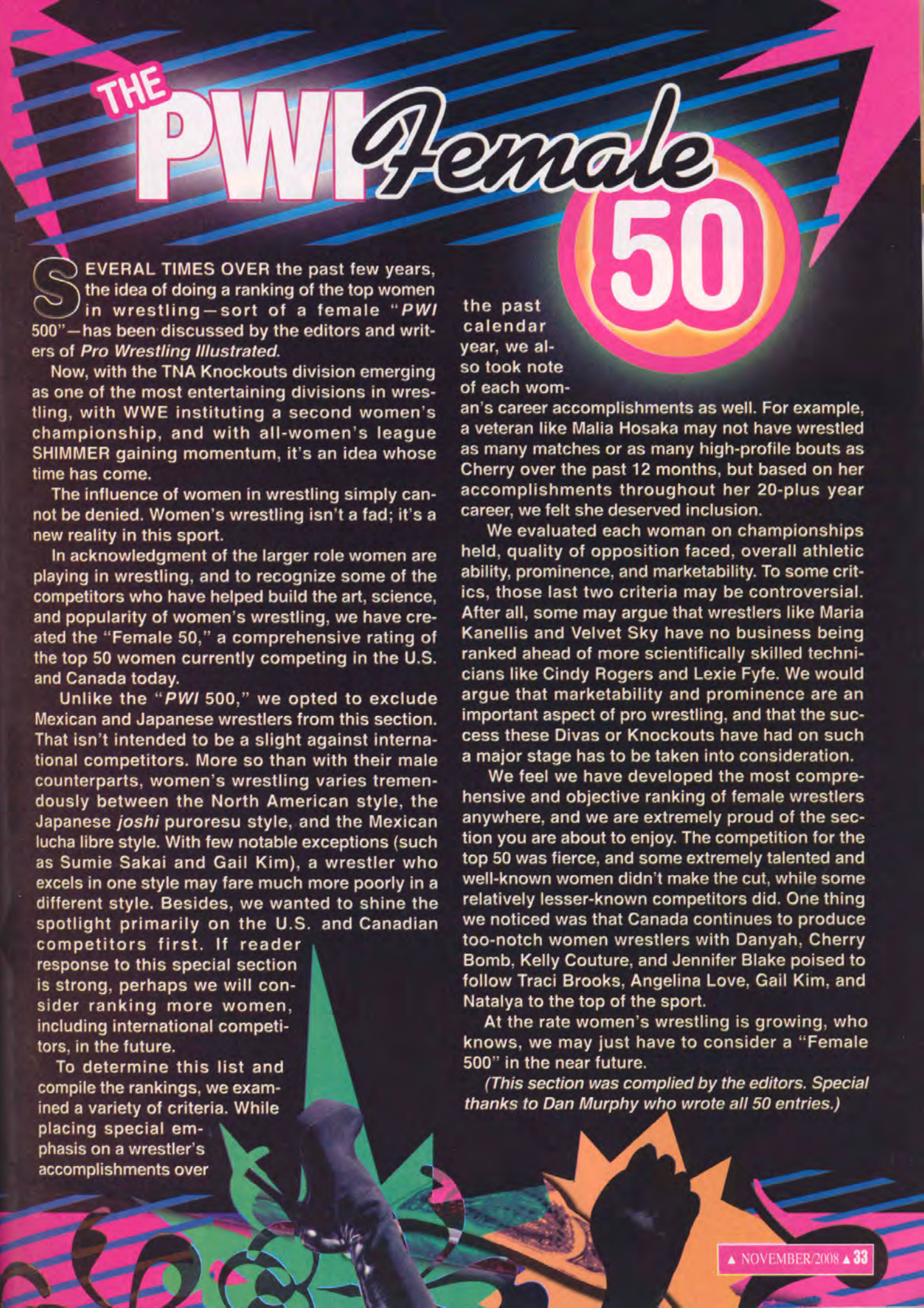
To determine this list and compile the rankings, we examined a variety of criteria. While placing special emphasis on a wrestler's accomplishments over the past calendar year, we also took note of each woman's career accomplishments as well. For example, a veteran like Malia Hosaka may not have wrestled as many matches or as many high-profile bouts as Cherry over the past 12 months, but based on her accomplishments throughout her 20-plus year career, we felt she deserved inclusion.

We evaluated each woman on championships held, quality of opposition faced, overall athletic ability, prominence, and marketability. To some critics, those last two criteria may be controversial. After all, some may argue that wrestlers like Maria Kanellis and Velvet Sky have no business being ranked ahead of more scientifically skilled technicians like Cindy Rogers and Lexie Fyfe. We would argue that marketability and prominence are an important aspect of pro wrestling, and that the success these Divas or Knockouts have had on such a major stage has to be taken into consideration.

We feel we have developed the most comprehensive and objective ranking of female wrestlers anywhere, and we are extremely proud of the section you are about to enjoy. The competition for the top 50 was fierce, and some extremely talented and well-known women didn't make the cut, while some relatively lesser-known competitors did. One thing we noticed was that Canada continues to produce too-notch women wrestlers with Danyah, Cherry Bomb, Kelly Couture, and Jennifer Blake poised to follow Traci Brooks, Angelina Love, Gail Kim, and Natalya to the top of the sport.

At the rate women's wrestling is growing, who knows, we may just have to consider a "Female 500" in the near future.

(This section was complied by the editors. Special thanks to Dan Murphy who wrote all 50 entries.)



1

Awesome KONG

(6'1", 272, 6)

Photo by Lee South/TNA Wrestling

The most physically dominant female in the sport reigned as TNA Knockouts champion from January to July ... Trained in the demanding All Japan women's dojo, making her pro debut in October 2002 ... Held All Japan's WWWA heavyweight title, recognized as one of the most prestigious women's championships in Japan ... In 2007, Kong won both the AWA and NWA women's titles, holding both championships simultaneously ... Competed throughout the United Kingdom before debuting in SHIMMER where she feuded with Sara Del Rey ... Debuted in TNA in October 2007, destroying Gail Kim in a singles match ... Lost to Kim by DQ at Turning Point 2007, then was pinned by Kim at Final Resolution ... Defeated Kim to win the women's title on January 10 in the main event of *Impact* ... Hired the mysterious Raisha Saeed as her manager and mouthpiece ... Successfully defended the women's title against Kim, Roxxi Laveaux, ODB, and others during the first half of 2008 ... Was a surprise participant in the Deuces Wild tag team tournament, teaming with B.G. James at Sacrifice... Issued a $25,000 open challenge to any female who could defeat her, and dispatched hopefuls like Daffney, Becky Bayless, and Amber O'Neal, before being upset by Taylor Wilde ... Inarguably the most powerful female in wrestling and one of the stiffest strikers of either gender ... Destroys opponents with her Awesome-bomb sit-out powerbomb and a lethal spinning backfist ... "Implant Buster" facebuster and accordion rack nicely showcase Kong's incredible power and sadistic streak.

2

Beth PHOENIX

(5'7", 150, 7)

"The Glamazon" had a stranglehold on the WWE women's title from October 2007 through April 2008 ... Actually began wrestling in high school in Elmira, New York, where she was the first female varsity wrestler in the history of Notre Dame High School ... Originally made her WWE debut in May 2006 as a fan favorite, saving Trish Stratus from an attack by Mickie James ... In June 2006, she suffered a fractured jaw after taking a hard slap to the face from Victoria and was sidelined for nearly a year after undergoing surgery ... Defeated Candice Michelle to win the women's title at No Mercy 2007 ... Was uncharacteristically emotional after achieving her childhood dream and winning a WWE title ... Scored the pinfall victory in her WrestleMania debut as she and Melina defeated Maria and Ashley Massaro in the *Playboy* Bunnymania tag team match ... Showcased her tremendous strength by hoisting both Mickie James and Melina on her shoulders for an impressive double backbreaker at Judgment Day ... Scored several wins over James, prompting James to actually break down in tears at one point because of her frustration at being unable to beat her ... Lost the belt in an upset to James on April 14 and regained it on August 17 at SummerSlam ... Defeated Melina in the first women's "I Quit" match in WWE history ... Claims to be "the ultimate combination of strength, skill, and beauty" ... Accepted an open challenge from Santino Marella on the July 14 edition of Raw and pinned the former Intercontinental champion.

© 2008 World Wrestling Entertainment, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

3

Gail KIM

(5'4", 125, 8)

Photo by Lee South/TNA Wrestling

The Korean beauty is the only woman ever to hold both the WWE and TNA women's championships ... Became TNA Wrestling's first ladies' champion at Bound for Glory 2007, winning a 10-woman gauntlet match to earn the championship ... Successfully defended the title by winning a four-woman match against ODB, Roxxi Laveaux, and Angelina Love at Genesis ... Began feuding with the massive Awesome Kong in late-2007 ... Ended Kong's undefeated streak by eking out a DQ win at Turning Point 2007 ... Managed to pin the monster in a no-DQ match at Final Resolution, but lost the title days later after receiving three consecutive power bombs from Kong ... Her ring style is heavily influenced by Japanese and Mexican techniques, and Kim has mastered dozens of speedy takedowns and submission locks ... Perhaps the most technically sound female wrestler in the sport today ... Won the WWE women's title in her debut match in the promotion in June 2003 ... Feuded with Trish Stratus, Lita, Victoria, and Molly Holly during that run, but was shockingly dropped by the company in November 2004 ... After competing on the independent circuit, Kim signed with TNA in 2005, aligning with Jeff Jarrett and America's Most Wanted ... Her wrestling career took a back seat to her managing career for the next year until she returned to the ring for a feud with Jacqueline Moore ... Defeated Moore in the first women's cage match in TNA history ... Currently feuding with The Beautiful People, Kim is TNA's most popular female and is considered the pioneer of the Knockouts division.

Mickie JAMES

(5'4", 124, 9)

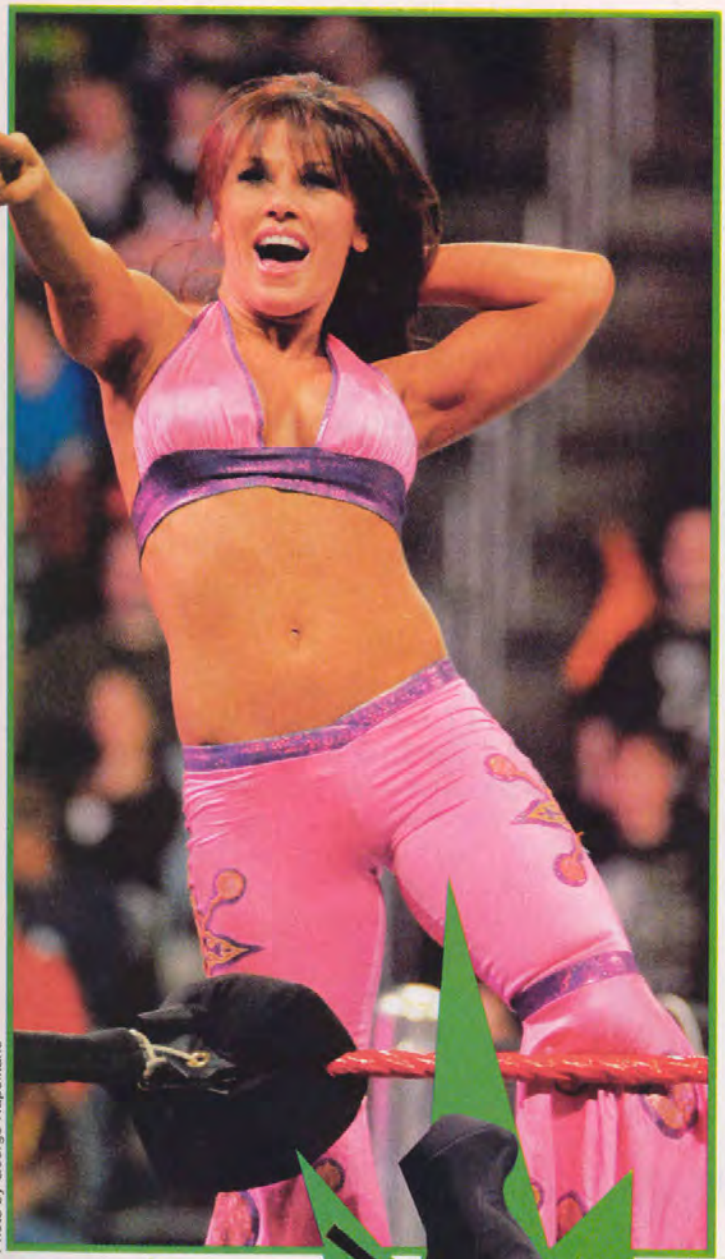


Photo by George Napolitano

The former WWE women's champion has held that title on four occasions ... Started her career as a valet with KYDA Pro Wrestling as Alexis Laree ... Competed on the independent circuit and appeared in Ring of Honor before debuting in TNA in 2002 ... Became part of a faction known as The Gathering, along with Raven ... Signed a WWE developmental contract and was assigned to Ohio Valley Wrestling in 2004 ... Appeared on WWE TV in fall 2005 as a fan stalking Trish Stratus ... Began dressing like Stratus and using Stratus' signature moves, then passionately kissed Stratus, who rebuked the advance ... James snapped and attacked Stratus, igniting a feud that culminated at WrestleMania 22, where James beat Stratus to win the women's title ... James' psychotic behavior made her a fan favorite, even though she was feuding with the popular Stratus ... Lost the belt to Lita, but regained it later that year ... Lost the title to Melina in February 2007 ... Faced Melina in the first women's falls-count-anywhere match in WWE history ... Won her third title in April 2007, but lost it that same night, giving her the shortest women's title reign in WWE history ... Was left off WrestleMania 23 and 24 and struggled in matches against Beth Phoenix ... Upset Phoenix with a victory roll to regain the title on April 14 in London, England ... Phoenix reclaimed the gold at SummerSlam ... Has an impressive array of roundhouse kicks and one of the most effective DDTs in the sport.

5

MsCHIF

(5'7", 135, 7)

Photo by Buddy LaMantia

The lady in green had one incredible weekend in April, defeating Sarah Del Ray for the SHIMMER championship on April 26 and beating Awesome Kong for the NWA women's title on April 27 ... Beat Kong by disqualification, but was awarded the championship due to a stipulation that allowed the belt to change hands in the event of a DQ ... Dubbed "Your Soul's Tormentor," MsChif currently competes in NWA Midwest, IWA: Mid-South, Ring of Honor, SHIMMER, and World League Wrestling ... Previously teamed with Daffney as The Scream Queens and has feuded with Daizee Haze, Mickie "Moose" Knuckles, and Awesome Kong ... Won the prestigious ChickFight tournament in 2006, defeating Mercedes Martinez in the finals ... Has allied with the Age of the Fall in Ring of Honor ... Is currently in the midst of her third reign as the NWA Midwest women's champion ... Was voted St. Louis Woman Wrestler of the Year in 2002, 2003, 2004, and 2006 ... Signature moves include her Desecrat or scissored DDT, her Code Green sunset flip power bomb, and her Obliterator tombstone piledriver from the second rope ... Formed the team of Diabolic Khaos with Delirious early in her career ... Known for her fierce independent streak, her hot temper, and her overall bad attitude ... Has been known to spit incapacitating green mist into opponents' eyes ... Supplements her impressive ground game with a terrific springboard moonsault and a vicious camel clutch variation she calls Gateway to Hell 2.

6

Sara DEL REY

(5'10", 155, 7)

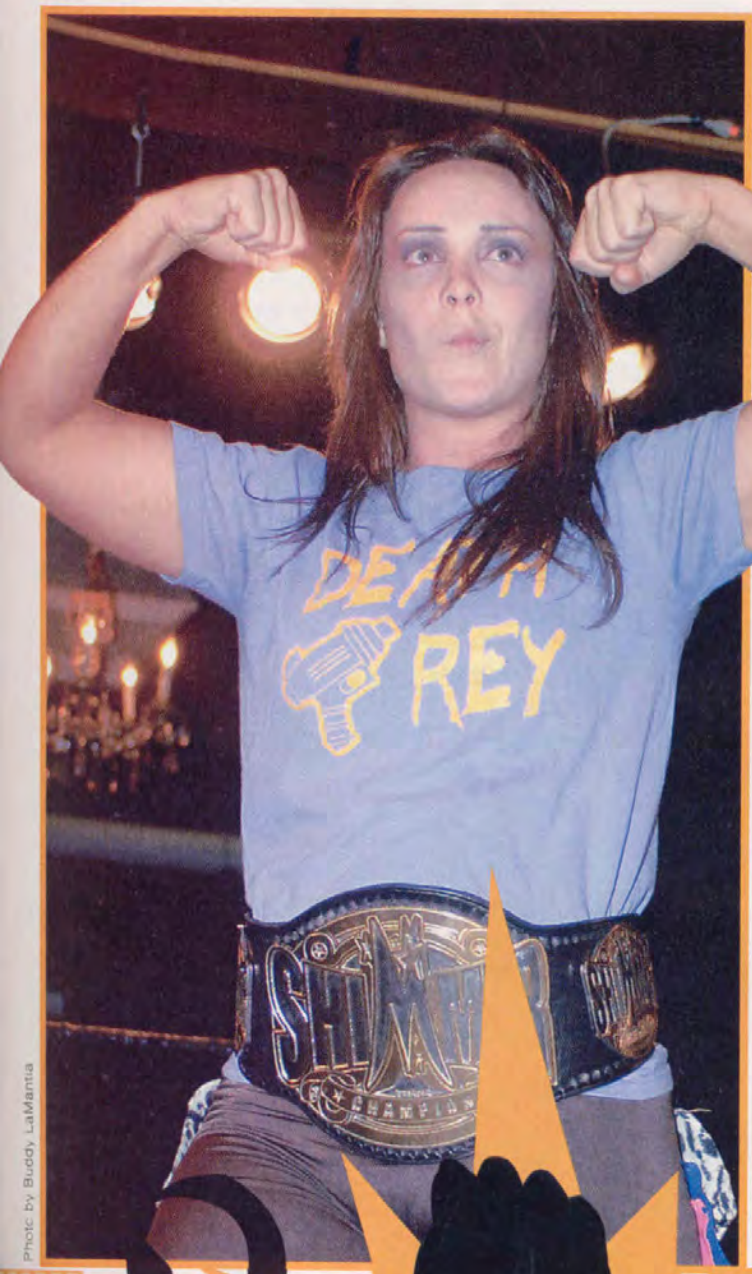


Photo by Buddy LaMantia

California native trained under Bryan Danielson and Donovan Morgan before making her pro debut ... Powerful competitor is a former SHIMMER heavyweight champion ... Defeated Lacey in the finals of a tournament to crown the first SHIMMER champion ... Successfully defended that championship for 10 months against the likes of Awesome Kong, Sarah Stock, and Daizee Haze before dropping the title to MsChif ... Toured Japan in 2005 and proceeded to add more of the stiff, Japanese style to her game ... That stiff style, combined with her natural size and strength, makes her a bruising force ... May have the stiffest front kick in women's wrestling ...Occasionally breaks out her "death rey," a toy gun she fires at confused opponents ... Is part of Larry Sweeney's Sweet and Sour stable in Ring of Honor ... She and Chris Hero claim to be ROH's intergender tag team champions ... In addition to her signature running kick, Del Ray has an expansive repertoire of suplexes, including a jarring German suplex ... Wrestled under a mask on a tour of Mexico in 2005 and briefly appeared under a mask as Nic Grimes for Wrestling Society X ... Has also held the Canadian Wrestling Revolution and Impact Zone Wrestling women's titles ... Del Rey is a vocal critic of wrestling "divas," and insists she is a wrestler first and foremost.

7 Roxxi LAVEAUX

(5'9", 140, 7)

Photo by Lee South/TNA Wrestling

The former "Voodoo Queen" may have lost her locks, but she has gained a tremendous fan following in TNA ... Previously competed on the independent circuit as Nikki Roxx before joining TNA in July 2007 ... Debuted in TNA as the voodoo priestess valet for The Voodoo Kin Mafia at Victory Road where she offset interference from Christie Hemme as VKM battled The Bashams ... Was the final woman eliminated in the gauntlet match to crown the first TNA women's champion at Bound for Glory 2007, ultimately losing to Gail Kim ... Her TNA career seemed to be in dire straits when VKM fired her in January, but The Beautiful People inadvertently helped Roxxi rediscover her killer instinct when they attacked her during an "emergency makeover" ... Unveiled an impressive finisher she dubbed the Voodoo Drop, which she has used to beat Angelina Love on several occasions, including a "Queen Of The Cage" match at Lockdown ... Was one of the final two participants (with Kim) in a "Makeover Battle Royal" at Sacrifice, but lost to Kim in a ladder match that followed the battle royal, meaning she had to have her head shaved per the match stipulation ... TNA fans have supported the shorn superstar in her feud with The Beautiful People and Moose ... The Boston native trained under Killer Kowalski and Slyk Wagner Brown ... Has competed in WEW, ROH, PGWA, NECW, and toured Mexico.

8

MELINA

(5'4", 122, 6)

The woman with the most beloved entrance in wrestling currently is on the mend from an injury suffered in June ... For the first time in her WWE career, Melina was hearing cheers from the fans due to her feud with Beth Phoenix ... Teamed with Phoenix to win the *Playboy* Bunnymania match at WrestleMania 24 ... That uneasy alliance fell apart when Phoenix abandoned Melina during a tag match against Mickie James and Maria ... Lost to Phoenix in an "I Quit" match at One Night Stand ... Melina is a two-time women's champion, winning that title twice in 2007 ... Got her start in California's Empire Wrestling Federation, where she competed as Kyra ... Was a contestant in WWE's *Tough Enough* contest in 2002 ... Didn't win but impressed WWE scouts enough to receive a developmental contract and was assigned to Ohio Valley Wrestling ... Became the manager of Joey "Mercury" Matthews and Johnny "Nitro" Hennigan, forming the group M-N-M ... M-N-M defeated the team of Eddie Guerrero and Rey Mysterio Jr. to win the Smackdown tag title in their debut match on Smackdown ... M-N-M split in 2006 and Melina accompanied Nitro to Raw ... Teamed with Nitro in a loss to the team of Carlito and Trish Stratus on *Saturday Night's Main Event* ... Successfully defended the women's title in the highest-profile singles match of her career, decisively beating Ashley Massaro at WrestleMania 23 ... Like Sherri Martel, has excelled as both a competitor and a manager.

© 2007 World Wrestling Entertainment, Inc. All Rights Reserved

9 Michelle McCOOL

(5'10", 127, 5)

Photo by George Napolitano

The first-ever WWE Divas champion has improved tremendously over the past few years ... Went from being at the center of a mid-card feud between Jaime Noble and Chuck Palumbo to becoming the top female star on the Smackdown brand ... Defeated Natalya to win the vacant Divas championship at the Great American Bash ... Has developed an extremely effective, if unorthodox, heel hook, which she has been able to apply quickly from a variety of defensive positions ... Worked as a seventh-grade teacher before getting involved in wrestling ... Competed in the 2004 Diva Search ... Debuted on Smackdown in 2005 as a personal trainer character and briefly feuded with Dawn Marie and Melina before being reassigned to Deep South Wrestling ... Returned to Smackdown in 2006 as a sexy schoolmarm, managing Idol Stevens and K.C. James ... Won a Memorial Day "Bikini Splash" battle royal, last eliminating Melina in May 2007 and eventually became Palumbo's valet ... Career took off after she broke away from managing and began to concentrate on developing skills to compliment her natural athleticism ... Emerged as the most popular female on Smackdown this spring ... Took Cherry under her wing and has helped protect and train the naïve roller-skater ... Promoted as WWE's resident "All-American Diva," McCool is drawing comparisons to Trish Stratus for her beauty, fitness, and dedicated approach to improving her wrestling skills.

10

Candice MICHELLE

(5'7", 120, 4)

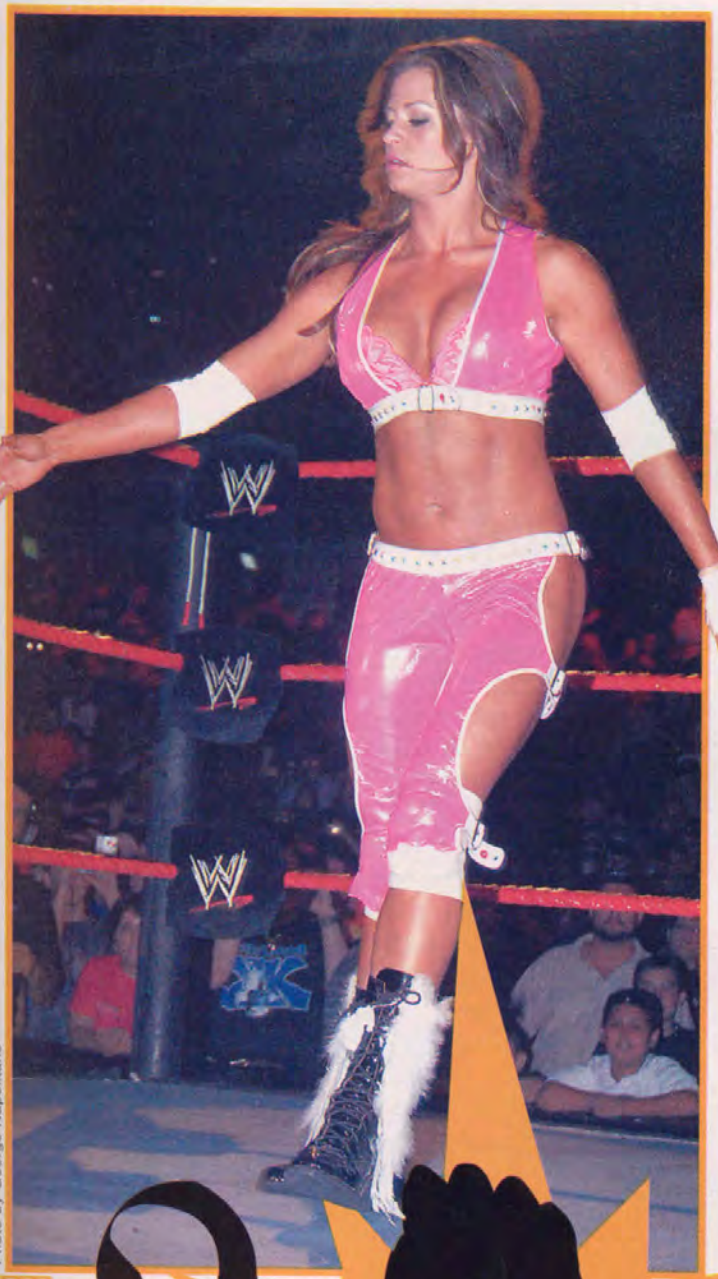


Photo by George Napolitano

The "Go Daddy" girl has missed most of the past nine months after cracking her clavicle in a match against Beth Phoenix in October 2007 ... Returned to Raw in February, but re-injured the collar bone in March during a tag team match against Jillian and Victoria ... The injury prevented Michelle from competing at WrestleMania 24, where she had been penciled in to take part in the *Playboy* Bunnymania match ... A former model and aspiring actress, Michelle broke into WWE through the Diva Search ... Her breakthrough role came during Super Bowl XXXIV, during which she appeared in a racy commercial for GoDaddy.com as a girl on the verge of a major wardrobe malfunction ... The commercial made Michelle the talk of the nation and she began appearing on WWE TV, usually in bra and panties matches ... Became a *Playboy* covergirl in 2006 ... Suffered a broken nose when Victoria kicked her hard in the face in November 2006 ... That stiff kick apparently helped Michelle get serious about wrestling ... She returned to the ring in 2007, feuding with Melina and Victoria and saying a woman could pose for *Playboy* and still be an elite wrestler ... Made that point once and for all by beating Melina for the women's title at Vengeance 2007 ... Scored an upset pin on Phoenix at Unforgiven, but lost the belt at No Mercy ... Derided by critics, Michelle proved to be arguably the best female wrestler in WWE in 2007, winning Achievement Awards for Woman of the Year and Most Improved Wrestler of the Year.

11

Mercedes MARTINEZ

(5'3", 145, 8)

SHIMMER standout appeared in Ring of Honor earlier this year as part of the Vulture Squad ... Was recovering from a shoulder injury when she was diagnosed with a back injury that will extend her time on the disabled list ... A native of Waterbury, Connecticut, she trained under ECW alum Jason Knight and started her career in Knight's Assault Championship Wrestling promotion ... Got a major break in New England Championship Wrestling, scoring a win over Kurt Adonis ... Became the centerpiece of NECW's women's division, eventually branching out to Connecticut Championship Wrestling, Jersey All-Pro, and other indy promotions in the Northeast ... Also toured IWA: Mid-South, where she feuded with Mickie "Moose" Knuckles ... Feuded extensively with Sumie Sakai ... Competed in SHIMMER's first event, wrestling to a 20-minute draw against Sara Del Rey and earning a standing ovation from the fans ... Also wrestled in a 25-minute four-way match that same night against Del Ray, Lacy, and Daizee Haze ... Appeared on WWE *Heat* in a loss to Victoria in summer 2006 ... Mercedes got revenge on Del Rey in October 2006, ending Sara's SHIMMER undefeated streak ... Main finisher is the Mercedes Benz, a modified Gory neckbreaker ... A suplex master, due in part to her low center of gravity and solid base, which allows her to deliver suplexes with maximum force and a low risk of being reversed or blocked ... A no-frills, smash-mouth competitor who may be the toughest woman, pound-for-pound, in wrestling.

12 VICTORIA

(5'8", 155, 8)

Photo by George Napolitano

Her entrance music says she's not a woman to mess with, and we're not about to disagree ... The black widow of Smackdown has established herself as the resident spoiler of the women's division, having roughed up Beth Phoenix, Candice Michelle, and Michelle McCool in recent years ... Actually carried a hit list to the ring with her in 2006 and crossed off the name of each Diva after she beat her down ... First appeared in WWE in 2000 as one of the Godfather's hoes, making her the longest-tenured female on the WWE roster ... The former fitness trainer and bodybuilder became interested in wrestling when she was asked to appear in a skit in WCW by her friend Torrie Wilson ... Started in WWE full-time in 2002 as a psychotic heel feuding with Trish Stratus ... Won her first women's title at the 2002 Survivor Series, beating Stratus in a hardcore match ... Lost the belt back to Stratus at WrestleMania 19 in a three-way match that also included Jazz ... Regained the title in February 2004, winning a four-way match against Jazz, Molly Holly, and Lita ... Beat Holly in a hair-vs.-title match at WrestleMania XX ... Failed to win the title a third time in a 2006 feud with Mickie James and hasn't seriously competed for the title since being sent to Smackdown in 2007 ... One of the most versatile females on the WWE roster, Victoria has been a fan favorite and a heel, plus, at various times, serious, comedic, and sexy ... In many ways, she's the closest thing there is to a female Kurt Angle.

13 Taylor WILDE

(5'3", 120, 5)

Photo by Lee South/TNA Wrestling

To the uninitiated, it seemed as if Taylor Wilde came out of nowhere to pull off the upset of the year and beat Awesome Kong for the TNA women's title ... In reality, the Toronto, Ontario, native has been competing for more than five years, including several impressive tours of Mexico, Canada, and South Africa ... Previously competed on the Ontario independent circuit as Shantelle Taylor and was trained by El Fuego ... Signed a WWE developmental deal in May 2006 and was assigned to Deep South Wrestling ... For some reason, WWE Creative hid her good looks under a mask and she competed as San-Eye in dark matches on the Smackdown brand ... Was released from her WWE contract in August 2007 and went back to the independent circuit ... Debuted in TNA in May as a fan looking to accept Kong's $25,000 challenge ... Kong passed over her for several weeks before finally facing Taylor in a competitive match on June 19 ... To earn a rematch, Taylor was forced to beat Raisha Saeed, which she did on July 3 ... Upset Kong for the title and the cash one week later, then proved her win was no fluke by once again pinning Kong at Victory Road ... Excellent missile dropkick and an arsenal of lucha-inspired armdrags and takedowns ... Her meteoric rise has made her plenty of enemies in the Knockouts' locker room, as many of the women feel Wilde didn't earn her spot, and women are lining up to try to beat her down.

14

ODB

(5'6", 130, 7)

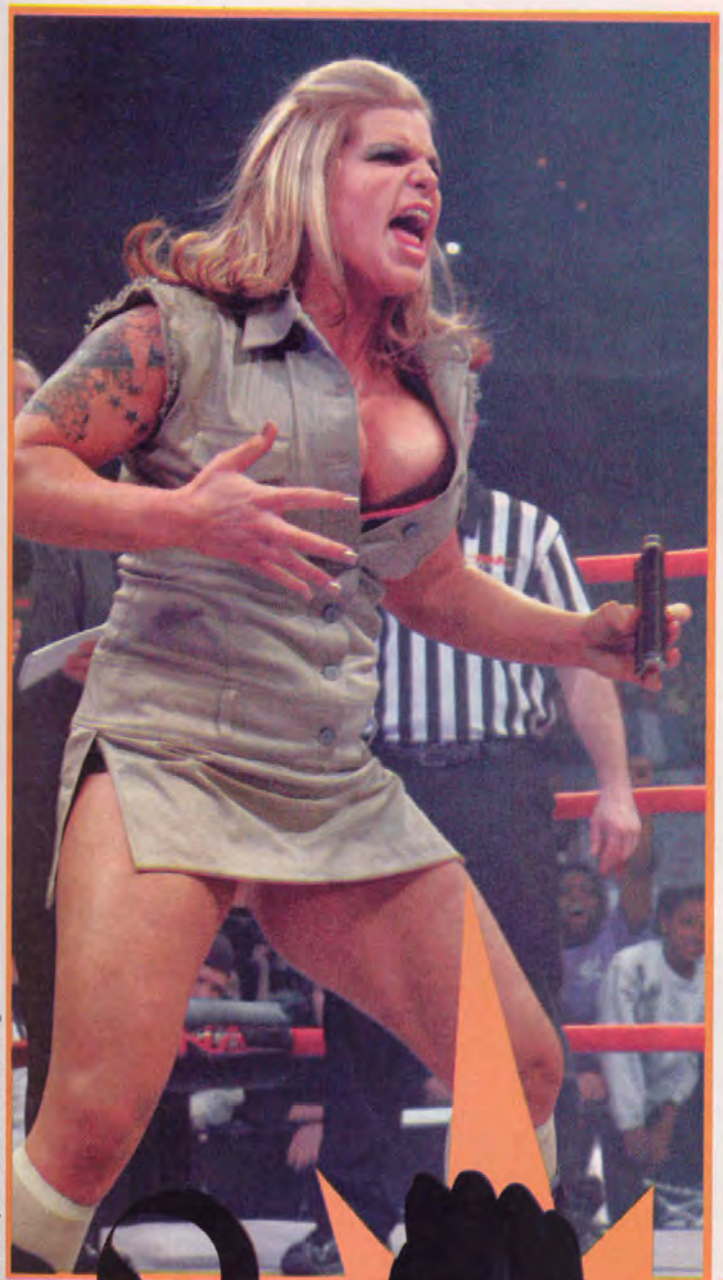


Photo by Lee South/TNA Wrestling

The O stands for One, the D stands for Dirty, and the B stands for the Bitch that ODB can become when she gets ticked off ... Powerhouse has a vocal following in TNA ... A lifelong wrestling fan, she tried out for the first season of *Tough Enough* and started out on the independent circuit when she failed to make headway in that competition ... Actually appeared in TNA in 2003 as ODB, and again in 2004 as Poison, competing against Trinity and Traci Brooks ... Moved to Ohio Valley Wrestling where she declared herself OVW women's champion ... Eventually, OVW booker Danny Davis recognized her claim, as ODB was the toughest woman in the territory ... Feuded with Katie Lea and Milena Roucka in OVW ... Became the first wrestler to go directly from OVW to TNA (as opposed to WWE), debuting at Bound for Glory 2007, participating in a 10-women gauntlet match to crown the first TNA women's champion ... Was unsuccessful in her bid to unseat Awesome Kong for the women's title at Against All Odds ... Built up a rabid fan following, due largely to her flask-swilling, breast-grabbing, "not another pretty face" persona ... Consider her the female version of Steve Austin, right down to the Thesz press ... Running powerslam and fall-away slam illustrate her impressive upper-body strength ... Struggles against opponents who can match her power (Kong) and willingness to fist-fight (Moose Knuckles).

15

Daizee HAZE

(5'4", 110, 6)

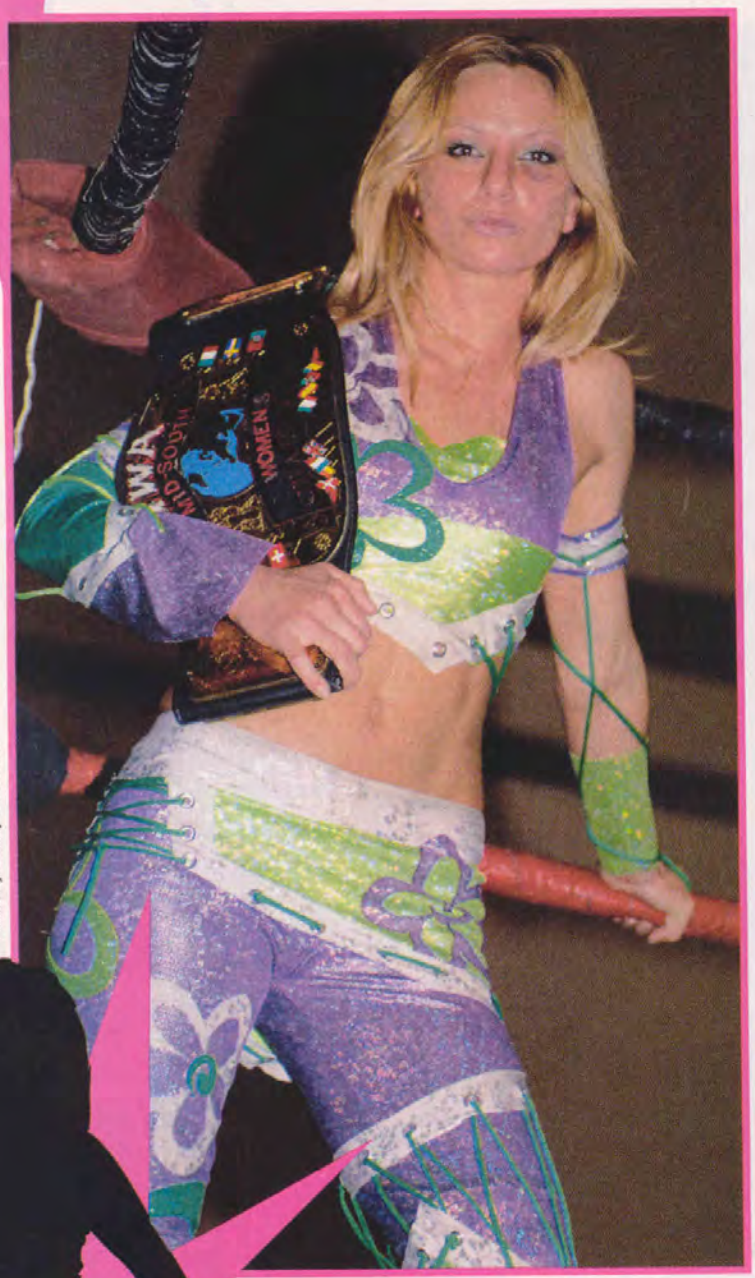


Photo by Buddy LaMantia

The tie-dyed love-child has had a busy year competing in SHIMMER, TNA, and IWA: Mid-South, among other promotions ... Has been a part of the SHIMMER roster since its debut show in 2005 ... Defeated Portia Perez and Malia Hosaka in the tournament to crown the first SHIMMER champion, but lost to her nemesis, Lacey, in the semifinals ... Feuded with the International Homewrecking Crew this year ... Won the IWA: Mid-South women's title in 2005, beating MsChif, Ariel, Sara Del Ray, Cheerleader Melissa, and Mickie Knuckles in a six-woman elimination match ... Regained the title on May 2, 2008, beating Knuckles and Del Ray in a three-way ... First appeared in TNA in 2003 and returned in May, losing to Cheerleader Melissa ... Was part of a major swerve in Ring of Honor, turning against Generation Next and joining Prince Nana's Embassy in late-2005 ... Feuded with Lacey throughout 2007 and 2008 in ROH ... Trained by Delirious, which may explain any incomprehensible mutterings she makes during her matches ... Won the sixth annual ChickFight tournament in 2006, beating Cheerleader Melissa, Allison Danger, and KAORU ... Signature moves include the "Mind Trip" snapmare driver, the running Yakuza kick, and her "Cashed Out" jawbreaker/facebuster combo ... A fluid counterwrestler, Haze is a solid ring general with quick reflexes and strong fundamentals, and has proven to be able to adjust to opponents of all styles and sizes.

Angelina LOVE

16

(5'6", 118, 8)

Photo by Lee South/TNA Wrestling

The former Angel Williams has had a banner year in TNA as one-half of The Beautiful People, along with Velvet Sky ... Started her career in Ontario, Canada, following in the footsteps of Gail Kim, Trish Stratus, and Traci Brooks ... Began as a valet, then trained under El Fuego ... Worked in Border City Wrestling, where she had her first run-in with Kim ... Made her TNA debut in 2004 in a loss against Trinity ... Won the Old School Pro Wrestling women's title ...Signed a WWE developmental contract later that year and was assigned to Deep South Wrestling, where she managed Johnny "Swinger" Parisi ... Had surgery to repair a torn ACL in 2006 ... Briefly managed The Gymini before that team was released ... Moved to Ohio Valley Wrestling in May 2007, but was released after just one appearance ... After a tour of Mexico, signed with TNA in September 2007 ... Formed Velvet Love Entertainment with Velvet Sky before switching that name to The Beautiful People ... TBP pride themselves on looking good for any potential talent scouts in the audience ... Have perfected some very enticing ring entrances ... The duo has taken to brown-bagging their enemies, placing a sack over their heads to humiliate them ... Frequently uses a STO variation or a camel clutch variation when she wants to hear an opponent scream ... A beautiful woman with a very ugly mean streak.

17

JACQUELINE

(5'3", 130, 19)

Photo by Lee South/TNA Wrestling

The former Miss Texas carves out a bit of *PWI* history, becoming the only person ever to appear in both the "*PWI* Female 50" and the "*PWI* 500" (1993) ... Veteran competitor concentrates on managing James Storm, but remains one of the toughest, most experienced women in the sport ... Has held both the WCW/WWE cruiserweight title and the WWE women's title ... Began her wrestling career in Texas in 1989 as Sweet Georgia Brown ... Won the USWA women's title 14 times (as Miss Texas) from 1992-1996 ... Debuted in WCW in January 1997 as Kevin Sullivan's girlfriend and teamed with Sullivan to feud with Chris Benoit and Woman ... Briefly managed Harlem Heat and feuded with Disco Inferno before leaving WCW and signing with the WWF in 1998 ... Debuted in the WWF as Marc Mero's valet and began a feud with Sable ... Technically beat Sable in a bikini contest when Vince McMahon DQ'ed Sable for wearing a body paint bikini ... Beat Sable to win the vacant WWF women's title in September 1998 ... Won that title a second time in 2000, beating Harvey Whippleman ... Left WWE in 2004 and debuted in TNA ... The most experienced and decorated woman in the sport today ... Muscular grappler favors a guillotine choke these days, but has also been known to break out a lethal DDT ... Has managed World champions Booker T, Bradshaw, and Farooq.

April HUNTER

(5'9", 150, 8)

18

The hardest working woman on the independent circuit is back in the ring after announcing her retirement earlier this year ... Currently based in Louisville, Kentucky, and manages husband J.D. Michaels in Ohio Championship Wrestling ... Started her wrestling career in WCW, where she associated with Scott Steiner and the New World Order ... Takes pride in being the only woman who has been invited to tour Japan on multiple occasions, held male championships, *and* been featured in *Playboy* magazine, which gives credence to her claim of being wrestling's true "total package" ... One of the most widely traveled wrestlers in the sport, Hunter has worked just about everywhere, including TNA, ROH, IWA: Puerto Rico, Japan, Germany, France, Mexico, and the United Kingdom ... Won the "Queen Of Chaos" tournament in France ... In addition to *Playboy*, Hunter has been featured in *Maxim* and will be a character in an upcoming comic book by Red Skye World Comics ... Main finisher is the Headhunter, a flipping neckbreaker off the middle rope ... Previously teamed with Talia (a.k.a. Velvet Sky) as T&A ... Has a variety of submission holds in her arsenal, including her Hunter Lock cloverleaf, centerfold headscissors armbar, and "Bitch Lock" hanging figure-four necklock ... Signature catchphrase is "How can something that looks so good hurt so bad?"

19 NATALYA

(5'6", 130, 8)

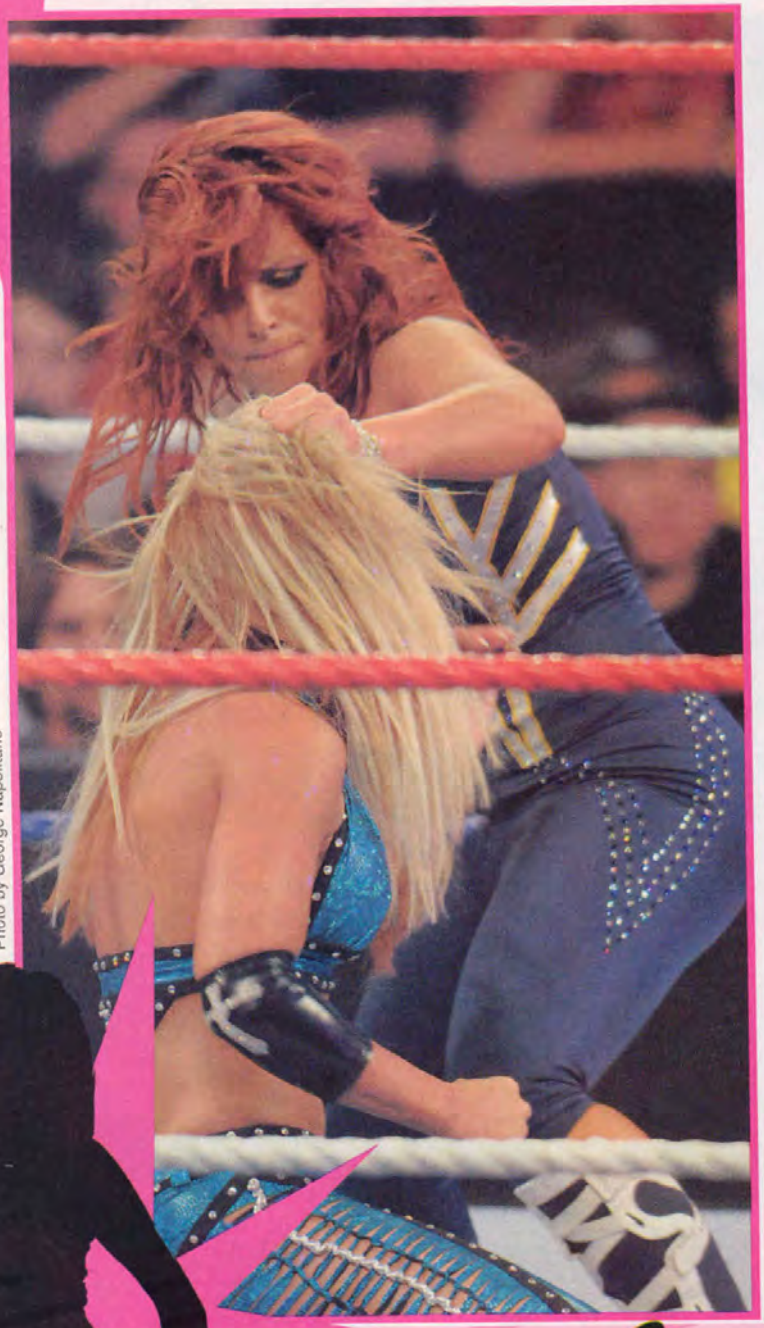


Photo by George Napolitano

The premier third-generation female competitor in the sport today ... Natalya is the daughter of Jim "The Anvil" Neidhart and has adopted her father's signature cackle as a tribute to him ... Uses the sharpshooter as a tribute to her uncle, Bret Hart ... Was frequently compared to Beth Phoenix prior to her WWE debut ... That may have prompted Natalya to dye her blonde hair red and to put more of an emphasis on mat work, as opposed to showcasing her raw power ... Trained under her uncles Bruce and Ross in the famed Hart Family Dungeon and is also schooled in amateur wrestling and mixed martial arts ... Started her career in Stampede Wrestling, then toured Canada, Europe, and Japan, and began incorporating international influences into her move set ... Had great success at the Ballpark Brawl events in Western New York, beating Traci Brooks at BPB 3 in 2004 (the card featured a Hart Foundation reunion of sorts, with Teddy Hart and Harry Smith joining Natalya) and beating Jackie Gayda and April Hunter in a three-way match at BPB 6 in 2005 ... Formed the Next Generation Hart Foundation with Teddy and Harry in OVW in 2007 before being reassigned to Florida Championship Wrestling ... Finally debuted in WWE on the April 4 edition of Smackdown, attacking Michelle McCool and Cherry ... In addition to her sharpshooter, has an impressive German suplex ... Previously used a sit-out powerbomb she called "Nattie by nature," and occasionally uses the backbreaker and running tackle favored by her father.

Sumie SAKAI

(5'3", 110, 11)

20

A former judo artist, Sumie emigrated from Japan to the United States in 2003 in hopes of becoming a successful pro wrestler in America ... Trained under Japanese star Jaguar Yokota and debuted in 1997 in Yoshimoto Ladies Pro Wrestling ... Won the junior championship and the Queen of the Ring title for the Japanese JDStar promotion before breaking her leg in a match against Lioness Asuka in 1999 ... Competed against some prominent male wrestlers in Japan, including The Great Sasuke and Jinsei Shinzaki ... Began competing in the U.S. in Sheldon Goldberg's New England Championship Wrestling and made some appearances in Ring of Honor, where her fast-paced style and comedic flourishes earned her a passionate fan following ... Made her mixed martial arts debut in October 2006, facing American kickboxer Amy Davis ... That match was ruled a no-contest after Sakai injured Davis' arm with an armbar ... She may be petit, but Sakai has a lethal fisherman's brainbuster and a dazzlingly quick huracanrana ... Despite her inability to speak fluent English, Sakai has enjoyed success throughout the U.S., including in such diverse promotions as ROH, Women's Extreme Wrestling, and CHIKARA ... Often chooses to selectively understand English-speaking referees, often holding an illegal move while the referee starts to count to five, then re-starts the count for the referee, making a game of it while refusing to relinquish the hold ... A veteran competitor with youthful exuberance, she has won championships throughout Japan and the U.S.

21 Allison DANGER

(5'7", 123, 8)

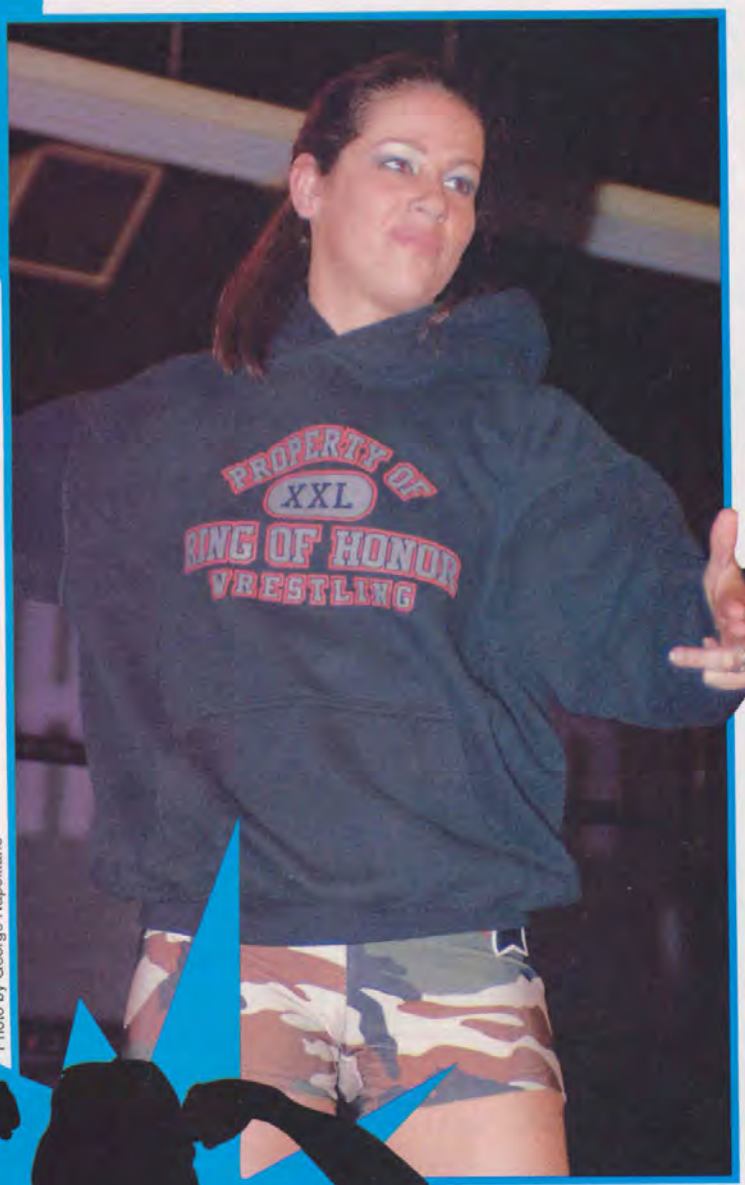


Photo by George Napolitano

One of the founders of SHIMMER, Danger has recently experienced both the best of times and the worst of times, fracturing her clavicle in a match in April, and then getting married in June ... Was part of the most controversial Ring of Honor segment of the year, when Larry Sweeney beat her unconscious, then tried to force Bobby Demspey to take advantage of her ... Steve Corino's kid sister got into wrestling in 2000 when The Sandman asked her to be his valet for an IWA card in Reading, Pennsylvania ... Enjoyed the experience and enrolled in the IWA Cruel School ... After completing her training, formed an intergender tag team with trainer "Rapid Fire" Maldonado and eventually won the IWA tag title ... Competed in Jersey All-Pro, IWA: Mid-South, and other promotions before joining Ring of Honor, where she managed The Christopher Street Connection ... Left the Connection for Christopher Daniels and The Prophecy, but was fired by Dan Maff and B.J. Whitmer, launching a feud between Danger and her former associates ... Left ROH after a feud with Daizee Haze but returned to manage Daniels when he returned to the promotion in 2005 ... Has toured extensively, competing throughout Europe and all over the Northeast and Midwest, winnings titles in the International Catch Wrestling Association, Pro Wrestling World-1, and elsewhere ... Teams with Sara Del Rey as The Dangerous Angels in SHIMMER ... Uses a stiff shimmering warlock kick and STO.

Traci BROOKS

22

(5'3", 140, 7)

Photo by Lee South/TNA Wrestling

The longest-tenured Knockout on the TNA roster, debuted in the promotion in 2003 attacking popular go-go dancer Lollipop ... Actually demanded to be including in the gauntlet match to determine the first NWA-TNA champion and threatened to file a sexual harassment suit if she didn't get her way ... A former calendar model, Brooks grew up on a farm in Ontario and trained for the ring under Ron Hutchinson, who also trained Trish Stratus and Edge, among many others ... Became the valet for Shane Douglas and Michael Shane as The New Franchise in TNA in 2003 ... After Douglas and Shane parted ways, Brooks stayed with Shane and also began managing Frankie Kazarian, eventually guiding both to the X division title, which they held simultaneously as co-champions ... Served as the executive assistant for TNA Director of Authority Dusty Rhodes in 2005, then went back to managing ... Began managing Robert Roode in 2006 but eventually left him when Roode became abusive and blamed her for a string of losses ... Finally got her long-awaited opportunity to regularly compete in TNA when the company instituted the Knockouts division last year ... While managing in TNA, Brooks had been keeping her skills sharp by competing all over the independent circuit, including NWA Cyberspace and Blood, Sweat, and Ears ... Has never been coy about using her assets to get what she wants and frequently says she "puts the T in TNA"—we assume she means T as in Traci ... Ran Payton Banks out of TNA after beating her at Against All Odds ... Main finisher is the diving facebuster or her old standby, the pie in the sky seated senton from the top rope.

23

Velvet SKY

(5'3", 118, 5)

Photo by Lee South/TNA Wrestling

Formerly known as Talia Madison, Sky is one-half of The Beautiful People, along with Angelina Love ... Hard to believe a woman as beautiful as Sky can be so hated by the fans ... Trained by Jason Knight, she broke into wrestling as a valet, sometimes working as Talia Doll ... Won the Women's Extreme Wrestling championship in a battle royal in 2004 ... Defeated Alere Little Feather and Nikki Roxx in a three-way match to win the Deviant Pro Wrestling women's title in April 2006 ... Formed the tag team T&A with April Hunter ... Signed with TNA and debuted as Talia Madison at Bound for Glory in 2007 ... Formed an alliance with Love a short time later, and The Beautiful People have developed into the top female tag team in TNA ... TBP has a unique ability to infuriate opponents and keep them flustered through quick tags, short bursts of offense, and a boatload of attitude ... Love and Sky turned heel by sneak-attacking Roxxi Laveaux during a makeover, calling the eccentric voodoo priestess "a freak" ... The two have recently begun trying to humiliate other Knockouts (as well as Jeremy Borash) by beating them down and placing brown paper bags over their heads ... Sky prefers kicking, slapping, scratching, and hair-pulling, but she can surprise opponents with her blockbuster neckbreaker or an effective headscissors takedown ... Won a battle royal to earn a title shot on the July 17 edition of *Impact*, but proved to be no match for Taylor Wilde.

Sarah STOCK

(5'4", 125, 6)

24

Photo by Buddy LaMantia

The "Dark Angel" has competed all over North America ... Started her career in Winnipeg where she competed for Tope Rope Championship Wrestling and Can-Am Wrestling ... Trained by Phil Lafron, and later received additional training from Eddie Watts and Diluvio Negro 1 ... Was awarded the Can-Am women's title in her debut with that promotion ... Toured throughout the Canadian Maritimes as Sweet Sarah, often paired with Johnny Wiseguy ... Began competing for World Xtreme Wrestling in Pennsylvania in 2003, where she feuded with Mercedes Martinez and Kyle Kruze ... Moved to Mexico later that year and began competing under a mask as Dark Angel ... Beat Simply Luscious to win the *lucha libre feminil juvenil* title ... Was unmasked by Princesca Sugey and began competing for AAA ... Was unhappy with AAA and jumped to rival CMLL, where she became a focal point of the company's women's division ... Beat Amapola in a hair-vs.-mask match in Mexico ... Also competed for Ring of Honor (as Sweet Sarah) and Ohio Valley Wrestling ... Feuded with Nattie Neidhart (Natalya) in a series of matches in Canada in 2006 ... Has competed in SHIMMER, wrestling against Daizee Haze and Sara Del Rey ... Main finishing move is the sit-out double-arm power bomb ... Also uses the camel clutch, the tilt-a-whirl backbreaker, and a reverse Samoan drop ... Rivaled only by Awesome Kong in terms of diversity of wrestling styles she has faced throughout her career.

25

Moose KNUCKLES

(5'8", 160, 5)

Photo by Lee South/TNA Wrestling

Muscle behind The Beautiful People currently is out of action after suffering a gruesome broken leg on an IWA: Mid-South card in July ... Injury couldn't have come at a worse time as she was making big waves in TNA ... Hardcore specialist was trained by Ian Rotten ... Debuted in 2003 in a non-tournament match during Mid-South's "King Of The Death Match" tournament ... Match was stopped when Hailey Hatred powerbombed her onto two steel chairs ... Entered the 2003 "Ted Petty Invitational" tournament, losing to Rotten in the first round ... Won the NWA Midwest/IWA: Mid-South women's title in June 2005, beating MsChif and Allison Danger in a three-way match ... NWA Midwest forced Knuckles to return the belt to MsChif, claiming she won it in an unsanctioned match, but Knuckles was allowed to keep the IWA title ... Won that title three times, her last reign ending in May ... Dropped a three-way to Daizee Haze (Sara Del Rey was also in the match) ... Has two "King Of The Death Match" tourneys under her belt ... Also won the 2006 "Queen Of The Death Match" tourney, which saw her beat Ann Thraxx in a staple-gun death match, Rachel Putski in a Taipei death match, and Mayumi Ozaki in a no-rope, barbed wire, fans-bring-the-weapons, steel cage death match ... Lost her hardcore crown in the 2007 tournament to nemesis LuFisto in the finals—a no-rope, barbed-wire, and electrified-light tubes death match.

26

Katie Lea BIRCHALL

(5'9", 145, 9)

Photo by George Napolitano

Paul Birchall's storyline little sister established herself as a top star in the U.K. before signing with WWE in 2006 ... Started wrestling at 18 ... Won a championship tournament that pitted Brits against Americans, earning the Trans-Atlantic Wrestling Challenge Champion's Cup ... Usually competed under the ring name Nikita ... Early career highlight came when she wrestled WWE Hall of Famer Sherri Martel on a card in Germany ... Won the 2005 "Queen Of Chaos" title in France and toured Italy with Nu Wrestling Evolution ... Impressed WWE talent scouts during a tryout in the U.K. and relocated to the United States after signing a WWE developmental contract ... Made her Ohio Valley Wrestling debut in August 2006 as Katie Lea ... Won the OVW women's title in November 2006, outlasting Beth Phoenix, ODB, and five other competitors in an eight-woman gauntlet match ... Lost the title to ODB in June 2007 but regained it in February with a win over Roucka ... Officially joined the Raw roster in April ... Relationship with brother Paul caused controversy when rumors emerged that they were to portray incestuous siblings ... Storyline never materialized ... Teamed with Paul to beat Ken Kennedy and Mickie James ... Failed to unseat James at Night of the Champions ... Earned a PPV title match barely two months after her debut, which speaks volumes about her abilities.

27 CHERRY

(5'5", 142, 9)

The demure roller-skater has stepped out on her own after taking a back seat to Deuce and Domino ... Started her career as a manager and a valet under the name Kara Slice ... Competed throughout the East Coast and eventually moved to Louisville, where she joined Ohio Valley Wrestling ... Made her debut as Cherry Pie, managing The Throwbacks, Deuce and Domino ... Began wearing her trademark roller skates and 1950s-style skirts and sweaters ... Her services were involuntarily shifted to Shawn Spears and Cody Runnels based on the stipulations of a victory over D&D ... Cherry seemed to have an eye for Spears, but it turned out the whole thing was a ruse, as Cherry double-crossed Spears and Runnels to help The Throwbacks win the OVW Southern tag title ... Managed Deuce and Domino to the Smackdown tag title in April 2007, but was more of a spectator with that team than a traditional manager, rarely interfering and frequently getting chastised by Deuce ... Broke away from Deuce and Domino this spring ... In her singles debut, scored a big upset victory over Victoria, surprising her with a schoolgirl rollup as Victoria was preoccupied with Michelle McCool at ringside ... Has taken McCool as a mentor and is rapidly improving and gaining confidence as a wrestler ... Has recently begun using a lifting DDT and an assortment of bulldogs ... More experienced than she lets on, Cherry is capable of surprising anyone on the right night.

© 2007 World Wrestling Entertainment, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

28

Cheerleader MELISSA

(5'8", 142, 10)

Photo by Buddy LaMantia

May be better known as the burkha-wearing Raisha Saeed on TNA, but Cheerleader Melissa has been a premier female on the independent circuit for a decade ... Second-generation wrestler ... Father, Doug Anderson, also was a wrestler ... Competed on her high school wrestling team ... Earned her pom-poms when she became the official cheerleader for The Ballard Brothers ... Competed in All-Pro Wrestling in California ... Trained in part by Christopher Daniels and Bryan Danielson ... Competed in Japan for a three-month run with the ARSION promotion ... Honored by the Cauliflower Alley Club with its Future Legend award in 2004 ... Competed on all 16 SHIMMER cards to date and won three ChickFight tournaments ... Appeared on WWE *Heat* in May 2006, losing to Victoria ... Participated in WWE workouts with Ivory, Molly Holly, and Jazz, which was a big learning experience ... Won the "Pro Wrestling World-1 Queen's Cup" tournament in January 2007 ... Appeared in TNA in January as Saeed, the interfering manager and mouthpiece for Awesome Kong ... Demanded that Taylor Wilde beat her to earn a title match against Kong ... Wilde succeeded, clearing her path to the Knockouts title ... Competed as Cheerleader Melissa on the May 1 edition of *Impact*, beating Daizee Haze, but went back under the burkha later that night ... Primary finisher is the air raid crash, but also uses a version of the Kudo driver, a back-to-back double-underhook piledriver.

29

Maria KANELLIS

(5'4", 122, 4)

Photo by George Napolitano

Once merely a ditzy backstage interviewer, now known for making millions of men very happy by defying her boyfriend, Santino Marella and deciding to pose for *Playboy* earlier this year ... The hype over Maria's *Playboy* pictorial rankled Melina and Beth Phoenix, setting the stage for the *Playboy* Bunnymania match featuring Playmates Maria and Ashley Massaro against Phoenix and Melina at WrestleMania 24 ... Scored the biggest win of her career in February, upsetting Phoenix in a non-title match on Raw ... She and Ashley lost at 'Mania, but that didn't stop Maria from sharing a post-match smooch with Snoop Dogg ... Not as strong or technically skilled as many women on this list, but may have been the most popular—and marketable—woman in wrestling over the past year ... Selected number 84 in *FHM* Magazine's "100 Sexiest Women Of 2008" ... Previously a bra-and-panties match specialist, has developed a flashy headstand-neckscissors-heelkick combo ... Her version of the bronco buster gets the biggest reaction ... Sent to Smackdown through the draft in June ... Remains to be seen if she'll contend for the new Divas championship or if she goes back to being a valet or interviewer.

Amber O'NEAL

(5'8", 140, 9)

Previously teamed with Krissy Vaine as Team Blondage, which can be considered a precursor to TNA's Beautiful People ... Held the Women's Extreme Wrestling tag title with Vaine, but replaced Vaine with Lollipop when Vaine signed a WWE developmental deal ... She and Lollipop lost the title to Talia Madison and April Hunter ... Trained with Gary Royal and Lelani Kai at the Mid-Atlantic Wrestling Academy, then under Mikael Yamaha and Gemini Kid at the Carolina Wrestling Federation Dojo Camp ... Debuted in the Pro Girl Wrestling Association in 1999 as Amber Holly ... Tore her anterior cruciate ligament and patella tendon in May 2003 and was out of action for almost a year ... Returned to action in mid-2004 as Amber O'Neal ... Has held the Carolina Championship Wrestling women's title, the CWF women's title, and the North American Championship Wrestling women's title ... Also competes in SHIMMER ... Most recently appeared in TNA on the June 25 edition of *Impact* as a fan looking to accept Awesome Kong's $25,000 challenge (fellow "fan" Daffney was selected instead) ... Competed on TNA/UWF house shows and seems poised to join the active TNA roster ... Main finisher is rear naked choke, which she calls the crotch rocket as a tribute to her love of dirt bike riding ... Also has pinpoint accuracy with her superkick.

31

Lexie FYFE

(5'4", 150, 12)

Had the highest-profile match of her career on April 21 when she portrayed Hillary Clinton in a comedy bout against "Barack Obama" on Raw ... One of the most respected and widely traveled female competitors in the sport today ... Met valet Brandi Wine in 1995 and attended an independent card to see her in action ... Became an immediate fan and began training to compete ... Struggled early in her training and considered quitting, but on the advice of Matt Hardy, enrolled in the OMEGA training camp and rediscovered her passion for competition ... Also attended training sessions at Johnny Rodz' wrestling school ... Runs SLAMmin Promotions with her husband, which publishes several wrestling-related websites ... Has competed against some of the biggest names on the independent circuit over the past 12 years, including Alexis Laree (Mickie James), Macaela Mercedes (Jillian), Malia Hosaka, Talia Madison (Velvet Sky), and Christie Ricci ... Teams with fellow ring veteran Hosaka as The Experience in SHIMMER ... Has competed on WWE house shows, *WCW Saturday Night*, NWA Ireland, NWA Hammerlock (United Kingdom), and dozens of independent promotions throughout the United States ... Main finishing move is a version of the TKO she calls the "attitude adjuster" ... Also known for her "figure-Fyfe" leglock, an inverted Indian deathlock, and her camel clutch ... Has held a slew of championships throughout her career, including a six-month run with the NWA women's title in 2005 ... Resides in Florida and takes care of five rescued cats.

Kelly

KELLY

(5'6", 112, 3)

Photo by George Napolitano

Former self-proclaimed exhibitionist has been keeping her clothes on a lot more lately, though rumor has it she is considering posing for *Playboy* next year ... Discovered by WWE Vice President of Talent Relations John Lauranaitis, who saw a photo of her in a swimwear catalogue ... Spent some time in Ohio Valley Wrestling before making her national debut on the first edition of ECW on Sci-Fi, performing a striptease ... Kelly's striptease became a weekly segment named "Kelly's Expose" ... Almost every episode ended with Mike Knox distracting her before she could take it all off ... The relationship between Knox and Kelly looked like it was on the rocks when Kelly became smitten with C.M. Punk ... At December to Dismember, Knox walked out on Kelly during a mixed tag match, letting Kelly take a beating from Ariel (Salinas)... Defeated Ariel two nights later in her first ECW singles match ... Formed the Extreme Expose dance troupe with Layla and Brooke, the group was later featured in Timbaland's video for *Throw It On Me* ... Extreme Expose eventually allied with The Miz, but Kelly only had eyes for Mahoney, of all people ... Seems to be concentrating more on wrestling than dancing (or stripping) these days and has scored wins over Layla and Jillian ... Took some time to work out the kinks, but her handspring back elbow has become a highlight reel move—though no one will ever mistake her for The Great Muta ... Joined the Raw roster in July and has become allies with Mickie James.

33

Cindy ROGERS

(5'5", 140, 7)

Photo by Buddy LaMantia

SHIMMER standout has patterned her wrestling style after Bret Hart, and calls herself "The Definition Of Technician" ... The Hartford, Connecticut, native trained at The Monster Factory in New Jersey, on the recommendation of Sgt. Slaughter ... Made her pro debut in 2001 ... Decided at age 10 she wanted to become a pro wrestler one day ... Had a long and violent feud with Allison Danger in SHIMMER that saw the two women square off in no-disqualification streetfights, best-of-three falls matches, and the first-ever women's dog-collar chain match in SHIMMER history, which Rogers won ... Proved she can brawl when forced to, even if her forte is clean, scientific wrestling ... Competed in Afa the Samoan's WXW promotion in Pennsylvania where she held the women's title ... Has also wrestled in ROH, PWU, AWA, and more than a dozen other independent promotions ... Held the NWA New Jersey women's title and was IWA Triple Threat champion ... Previously teamed with Alicia as The Big Unit ... Has adopted Hart's ringpost figure-four leglock and uses an impressive sit-out facebuster.

Jillian HALL

(5'5", 140, 10)

34

Photo by George Napolitano

Aspiring pop star is such a lousy singer that she actually got arch-rivals Trish Stratus and Lita to see eye-to-eye on something, as both of them attacked her on the Raw 15th anniversary episode in December 2007 ... Originally trained at Finlay's wrestling school and made her pro debut in 1998, competing as Macaela Mercedes ... Toiled on the independent circuit for five years before going to Ohio Valley Wrestling in 2003 ... Changed her ring name to Jillian Hall ... Had perhaps the best-ever reason for a heel turn when it was claimed her new breast implants had leaked into her brain, causing her to become more violent ... Managed the team of Tank and Chad Toland and introduced bodybuilder Melissa Coates as her personal bodyguard ... Came to WWE as a hired associate of M-N-M (and mysteriously sprouted a huge mole on her face), but quickly went off on her own ... Briefly feuded with Stacy Keibler, then found work as an "image consultant" for John Bradshaw Layfield ... Lost the unsightly mole when The Boogeyman decided to gnaw it off her face, which still wasn't as bad as when he put a handful of wriggling worms down Jillian's panties ... Feuded with Ashley Massaro in 2007 and reinvented herself as a wannabe songstress ... Jillian jumped to Raw in 2007 and feuded with Mickie James and Candice Michelle ... Though she has been saddled with some truly lousy gimmicks, Jillian is a great high-flier and can flawlessly execute both the 450-splash and the moonsault.

35

Malia HOSAKA

(5'6", 140, 21)

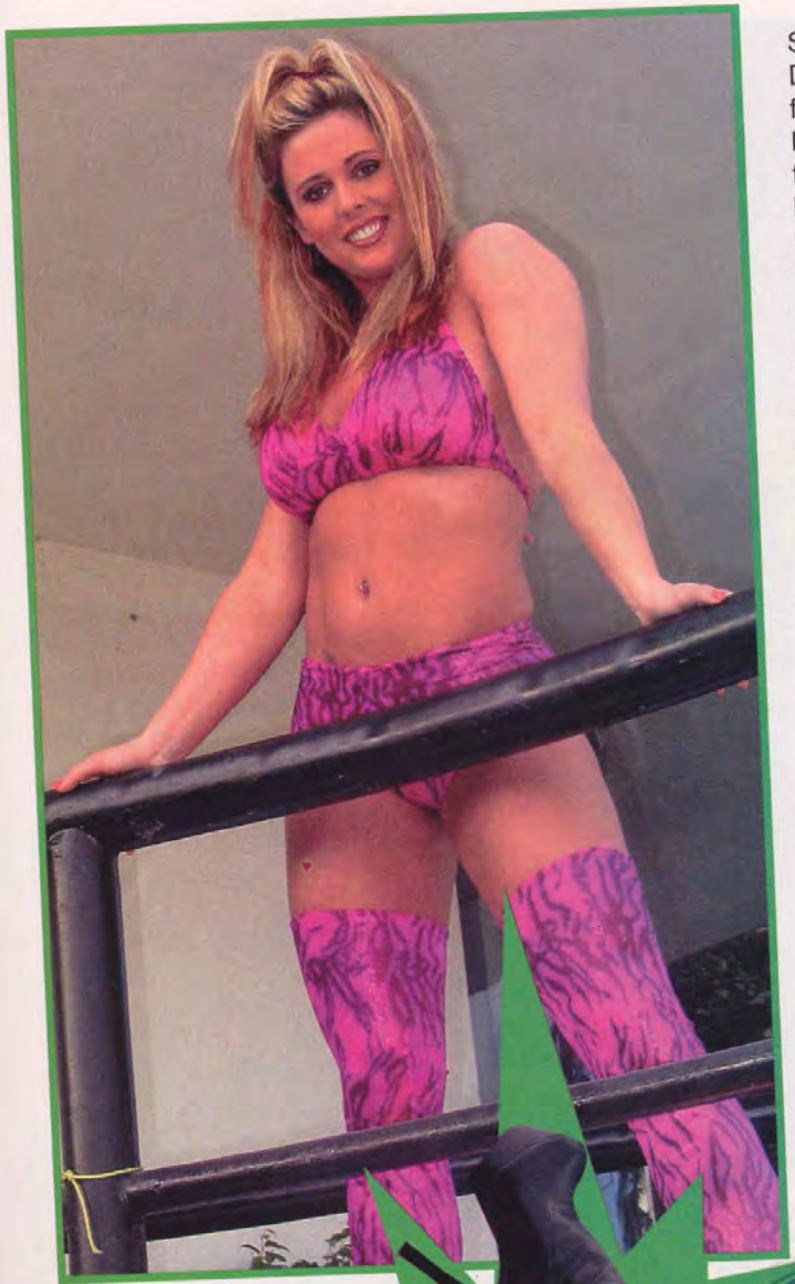
Photo by Buddy LaMantia

Veteran competitor is semi-retired but continues to compete for SHIMMER and accept select independent dates ... Only woman in the business who can honestly say she worked for ECW, WCW, WWF, and TNA ... Competed in the groundbreaking Ladies Professional Wrestling Association in the early-1990s ... Wrestled a 1993 match against Sherri Martel ... Took part in the tournament to crown a WCW women's champion in 1996 ... Took on Sonny Onoo as her manager and competed mostly on *WCW Saturday Night*, though she did make some appearances on WCW's flagship *Nitro* program ... Faced the likes of Madusa, Akira Kouta, and Lelani Kai in WCW ... Won the New Dimension Wrestling women's title twice in 1998, beating Debbie Combs and Starla Saxton (a.k.a. Molly Holly) ... Signed a WWF contract and appeared on Raw in 1999 as an unnamed fan who answered an open challenge by women's champion Ivory, only to be attacked by Ivory's bodyguard, Nicole Bass ... Vanished from the WWF a short time later ... Continued to compete on the independent circuit and won the NWA women's title ... Competed in an eight-woman tag team match at WrestleReunion in 2005, teaming with Wendi Richter, Bambi, and Jenny Taylor against Martel, Peggy Lee Leather, Krissy Vaine, and Amber O'Neal ... One of women's wrestling's true pioneers, Hosaka continues to be a mentor—and a force to be reckoned with—in SHIMMER.

Christie RICCI

(5'10", 160, 6)

36



Statuesque Tennessee native attended Sunday school classes with a young Ted DiBiase Jr. and became a huge fans of his father, "The Million Dollar Man" Ted DiBiase ... Decided she wanted to become a wrestler by the time she was eight years old ... Started bodybuilding at the age of 17 to prepare for wrestling ... Met veteran grappler Lelani Kai in Nashville and began training with her ... Made her wrestling debut in 2002 in the Pro Girl Wrestling Association and was named that promotion's Rookie of the Year ... A competitor in many beauty pageants, Ricci christened herself the "All-American Sweetheart" ... Currently goes by the nickname the "Mississippi Queen" ... Defeated Miss Janeth to win the *lucha libre feminil* ladies' championship in Mexico ... Though many of her peers would consider her a power wrestler because of her imposing size and natural strength, Ricci prefer to think of herself as a technician and uses the Indian deathlock and the short leg scissors ... Also uses a version of the torture rack backbreaker ... Held the NWA women's championship from 2005 through 2007, winning the belt from Lexie Fyfe and eventually losing it to MsChif ... Has also held the CPW women's title, the GSW women's title, the MWO women's title, the USWO TVF title, WPW women's title, and the XWF women's title ... Ricci has relocated to Southern California, where she earned an MBA ... Old-school wrestler with a decidedly new-school attitude.

37 Becky BAYLESS

(5'2", 119, 6)

Photo by Buddy LaMantia

A former valet, Becky Bayless looked to follow in the footsteps of her childhood inspiration, Sherri Martel, and began training under Homicide at The Doghouse in Brooklyn in 2002 ... A good-natured fan favorite, she has been accused of having more guts than brains ... Often accepts matches against bigger, more experienced women and takes a good beating, but she always gets back up and accepts the next challenge ... Before you knock her intelligence, she also graduated college *cum laude* with a bachelor's degree in advertising and marketing communications ... Has long feuded with arch-rival Alicia ... Competed in the 2004 IWA: Mid-South Volcano Girls tournament ... Debuted in Ring of Honor as part of the Special K faction ... Faced Alexis Laree (Mickie James) in ROH, losing in about three minutes ... Also feuded with Lacey in ROH ... Was involved in a serious car accident that forced her to leave wrestling ... Took a job with Warner Music Group, but recently returned to the ring ... A big music fan who loves to go to concerts and check out new bands whenever her schedule allows ... Won the TWE Texas ladies' title in July 2007 and was named Miss USA Pro Wrestling ... Competed in the sixth annual "WXW Elite 8" tournament ... Trademark look involves lots of polka dots ... Principal finisher is a reverse pedigree ... Also uses the Tornado DDT, the STF, La Magisterial, and a variety of jawbreakers.

38

Alere LITTLE FEATHER

(5'2", 125, 5)

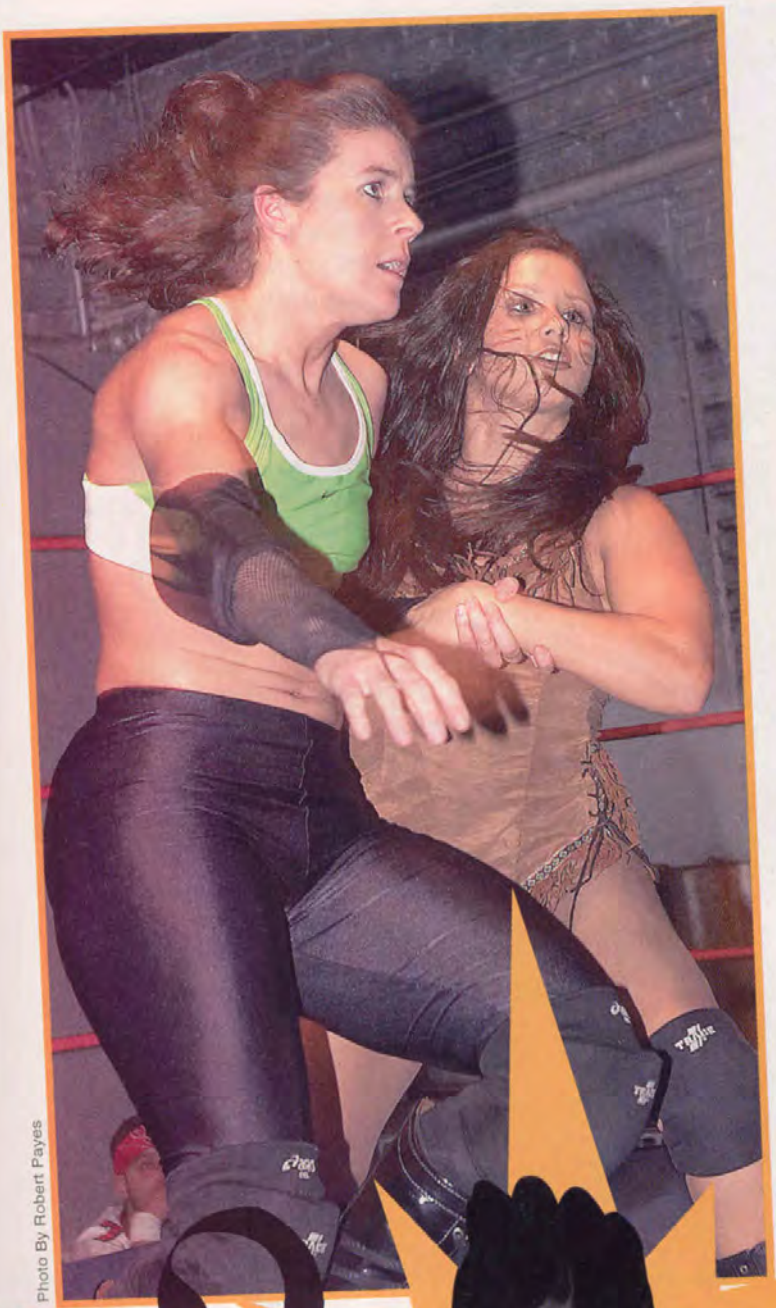


Photo By Robert Payes

Hails from the Shinnecock Indian Reservation in Long Island, New York ... A versatile competitor with an old-school flair ... Also an adept technician and capable brawler who has chopped down some big names with her stiff tomahawk chops ... Started her wrestling career in May 2003, training at the Cruel School ... Barely one year after her debut, she won the 2004 "Women's Extreme Wrestling Elite 8" tournament, upsetting Mercedes Martinez in the finals ... Collected wins over Beth Phoenix in Ontario's Neo Spirit Pro Wrestling ... Applies several different painful armbar variations quickly and unexpectedly ... Frequently wins matches with a Fujiwara armbar ... Also uses the Indian deathlock as a nod to her Native American ethnicity ... Deadly serious when the bell rings, but also has a lighter side ... Calls one of her signature chokeholds the "Choke-a-Hontas" ... Held the PWU women's title, the UWA women's title, the AWA New Jersey women's title, the SSCW women's title, and tag titles in WEW and NWL/HOPWF ... Has feuded with Martinez, Little Jeannie, and Angel Orsini ... A self-professed "history dork," Little Feather is also a true student of the game and takes pride in representing her Native American heritage, following in the footsteps of men like Don Eagle and Wahoo McDaniel.

39

Layla EL

(5'2", 120, 2)

Former Miami Heat dancer joined WWE after winning the 2006 Diva Search contest ... Briefly worked as a backstage interviewer on Smackdown ... Made her official in-ring debut in a Divas battle royal in October 2006, but was eliminated from that match due to interference from The Miz, who was angry that Layla had spurned his advances and tricked him into getting a lap dance from "Big" Dick Johnson ... Moved to ECW in January 2007 ... Became part of the Extreme Expose dance troupe, and was probably the best dancer of the bunch ... The Expose eventually aligned with The Miz, but fell apart when Kelly Kelly became infatuated with Mahoney ... Faced Kelly several times in ECW ... Was sent to Raw this summer, making her the first Diva Search winner to compete on all three WWE brands ... Relatively inexperienced as a wrestler but has tremendous cardiovascular conditioning and a fierce will to win ... Signature moves are the standing 540 kick and the running crescent kick ... Arguably the best legitimate athlete of any Diva Search winner ... Has been featured in *FHM*, *JET*, *Smooth*, *King*, and *Liquid* magazines ... Appeared on *Project Runway* and VH-1's *Celebrity Fit Club Boot Camp*.

© 2007 World Wrestling Entertainment, Inc. All Rights Reserved

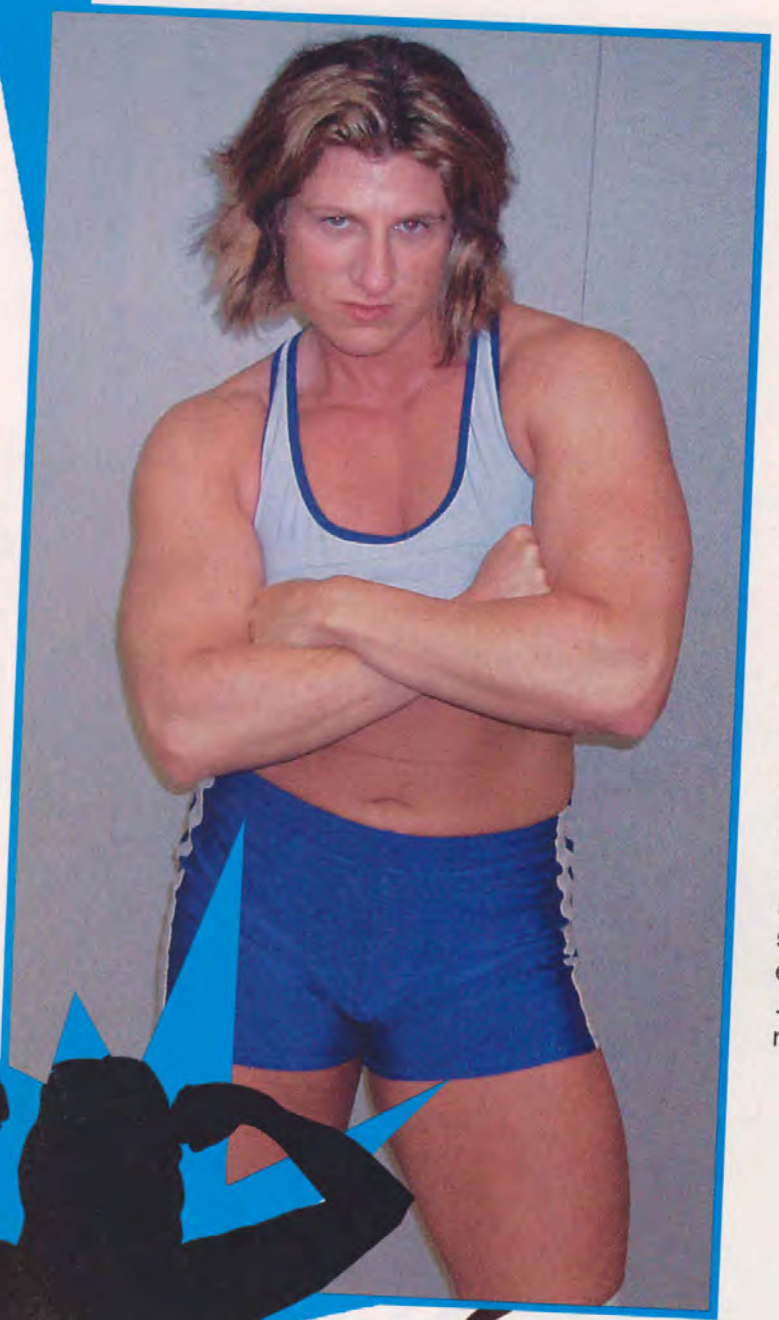
Kelly COUTURE

(5'4", 136, 2)

"Au Naturelle" is an emerging force on the Canadian independent scene ... Competes for Ontario's Blood, Sweat, and Ears promotion ... Trained by El Fuego ... Defeated Danyah, Tiana Ringer, and 21st Century Fox in a February 2007 four-way match in Toronto ... Scored another impressive victory one month later, teaming with Gail Kim and Bang Bang Pete to beat Danyah, Ringer, and Traci Brooks in a six-person tag bout ... Teamed with Angelina Love to beat Brooks and Danyah on a card headlined by Kurt Angle defending the TNA World title against Christian Cage ... Has also wrestled against Kim, Christy Hemme, and Hailey Rodgers ... Teamed with Kim to beat Brooks and Sara Del Rey at Ballpark Brawl 8, in a match refereed by Jennifer Blake ... Suffered a broken nose and broken rib, but says those injuries only made her tougher ... Has also worked as a Hooters girl, and has been pressed into service as a bouncer when needed ... Proud owner of a pit bull, which she says is the love of her life ... Presents herself as a clean-cut fan favorite and frustrates her opponents with her crisp deep-armdrag takedowns and quick schoolgirl cradles ... Delights fans with her post-match, hip-swivelling celebratory dances and her barely there bikini briefs ... Popular fan favorite looking to expand beyond Ontario and appear in more promotions.

41 JAIME D

(6', 180, 8)



The winner of TNA's "Gut Check Challenge," Jaime D trained under Scott D'Amore in Border City Wrestling ... Competed briefly in TNA under the name of Sirelda in 2006, managing A.J. Styles and Christopher Daniels ... Paired with that team to help offset interference from Gail Kim in matches against America's Most Wanted ... Has completed three tours of Canada ... One of the largest and strongest women in the game ... Defeated Nanae Takahashi to win the AWA women's championship ... Has also wrestled in Women's Extreme Wrestling ... Frequently wrestles against men as well as women and has drawn comparisons to Joanie "Chyna" Laurer for her incredible strength and killer instinct ... Size and strength make her bodyslams a potential finishing move, but she also likes to employ a variety of chokeslams and power bombs as well ... Was one of three guest judges scoring a European rules bout between Delirious and Claudio Castagnoli at a Ballpark Brawl event in 2007 ... When fellow judges Slick and The Big Mosh disagreed on the winner, Jaime threw her hotel room key between the two wrestlers and said she would award the match to whomever agreed to meet her back in her room ... Castagnoli dove on the key and left the ring arm-in-arm with her.

42

Christy HEMME

(5'5", 116, 4)

Photo by Lee South/TNA Wrestling

Redheaded siren has proven to be a talented wrestler when she can pry herself away from the Rock and Rave Infection long enough to concentrate on her career ... Former Hawaiian Tropic bikini model and Hooter girl won the first WWE Diva Search competition and was awarded a one-year contract and $250,000 ... Getting a WWE deal handed to her on a silver platter didn't set well with a lot of the female veterans, making Hemme a marked woman ... Trish Stratus, in particular, took offense to Hemme's presence in WWE, particularly after Hemme landed on the cover of *Playboy* in April 2005 ... Hemme challenged Stratus for the WWE women's title at WrestleMania 21 ... On paper, it seemed to be a complete mismatch, but Hemme proved she had been working hard to learn how to wrestle and scored several near-falls before ultimately being defeated ... Went on to feud with Victoria before being moved from Raw to Smackdown ... Found herself on Melina's hit list on the blue brand ... Teamed with Animal and Heidenreich to beat M-N-M in a six-person match at No Mercy 2005, winning the match after executing the doomsday device finisher ... Was shipped down to OVW and quietly released at the end of her one-year contract ... Competed in the 2006 "Queen Of Chaos" tourney in France before signing with TNA ... Received additional training from Scott D'Amore ... Feuded with Voodoo Kin Mafia (particularly Kip James) over his attitude toward women ... After unsuccessfully managing a string of teams, signed Lance Rock and Jimmy Rave ... Main finisher is her guillotine split-legged drop.

43 ROUCKA

(5'8", 125, 2)

Former Ohio Valley Wrestling women's champion now plying her trade in Florida Championship Wrestling ... Made her FCW debut in March, after WWE switched developmental affiliates ... Currently feuding with The Bella Twins and Angel ... Occasionally teams with Daisy when she isn't wrestling against her ... Teamed with Beth Phoenix to battle The Bella Twins on a recent card ... Has also partnered with Brad Allen in intergender tag matches ... Finished fourth in the 2006 WWE Diva Search, but the federation signed her to a developmental deal anyway ... Debuted in OVW as the manager of Bad Company (Mike Cruel, Shawn Osbourne, and Eddie Craven) in November 2006 ... Captured the OVW ladies' championship by outlasting Serena, Melody, Josie, Katie Lea, and OBD in a divas six-way match in September 2007 ... Dropped the belt to Katie Lea that June ... Favorite finishers are the Roucka bottom (an inverted suplex slam) and a standing moonsault ... Also relies on the kneeling facebuster, headscissors takedown, and Stinger splash to soften opponents ... Canadian native of Czech and Costa Rican descent, raised by her father in Vancouver, British Columbia ... Has appeared in commercials for Trident gum and Lux soap ... Studied business at the University of British Columbia, but dropped out to pursue a modeling career in 2004 ... Became the first North American to the win the *Piel Dorado*, one of the world's biggest Latin American modeling contests ... Would fit in nicely on any WWE brand, as Vince McMahon is said to be looking to showcase more ethnic superstars.

Photo by Rob Beukema

Annie SOCIAL

(5'3", 131, 7)

Photo by David Garrett

Raven-haired beauty says she hails from "Killadelphia, PA" ... Was working at a bar when a promoter asked if she would do some oil wrestling matches ... After a few years of rolling in the oil at various nightclubs, she decided to train for the ring ... Attended classes at the Pro Wrestling Unplugged training center, working with Trent Acid, Gary Wolf, and Mike Kehner ... Childhood experience in boxing and martial arts helped develop her affinity for professional wrestling ... Has held the Women's Extreme Wrestling championship twice and defeated veteran hellraiser Amy Lee to win the PWU women's title ... Lost the PWU women's title to Cindy Rogers ... Prefers a straight-forward brawling style with an emphasis on hard punches and chokes, but has a variety of takedowns that ground opponents before she works them over with strikes ... Made it to the finals of the 2006 "WXW Elite 8" tournament, ultimately losing to Rogers ... Says her toughest opponents to date have been Moose Knuckles and Sara Del Rey ... Main finishing move is a "Stone-Cold" stunner variation she calls the "Social disorder" ... True to her name, Annie Social tends to be a loner with a chip on her shoulder, but she has formed successful tag teams with April Hunter, Sumie Sakai, and Roxie Cotton.

45 LuFISTO

(5'3", 137, 11)

Photo by Sylvain Lapensée-Ricard

French-Canadian pioneer of hardcore wrestling made U.S. debut in the Eastern Wrestling Alliance as Precious Lucy ... Wrestled in Vermont's Green Mountain Wrestling as well ... Started career as valet for Steve Ramsey ... Quickly graduated to mixed-gender tag matches with Mark Nugera ... Team was managed by Joshua Shea and called Partners in Crime ... Showed up in Blood, Sweat, and Ears promotion ... Banned from wrestling in Ontario because athletic commission forbade men and women from competing against each other ... Petitioned Ontario Human Rights Commission to have the regulation removed ... Got what she wanted, but skipped to NWA Quebec, where she and Dru Onyx opened a wrestling school ... Became the first woman to become Combat Zone Wrestling's Iron Man champion by pinning Kevin Steen in August 2006 ... Made SHIMMER debut two months later, losing to Mercedes Martinez ... Continued dominance over men by winning the "Stranglehold Wrestling Death Match" tournament ... Beat Juggulator, Skullion, and Necro Butcher in three successive rounds ... Returned to CZW and became the first woman to wrestle in the cage of death ... Announced retirement in January 2007 due to a back injury but returned to Montreal's Association de Lutté Féminine that April ... Beat Mickie Knuckles to become IWA: Mid-South's "Queen Of The Death Match" in October 2007 ... Committed to full-time comeback by appearing in IWA, CZW, and SHIMMER ... Uses the diving star (swan dive headbutt) to finish off opponents ... A graphic art enthusiast in her free time.

Rhaka KHAN

(6'3", 150, 3)

96

Photo by Lee South/TNA Wrestling

Scott Steiner's latest super-freak was actually a contestant in the 2005 Diva Search, making the top 25 before being eliminated ... A former collegiate basketball and volleyball standout at Florida State University ... Despite being eliminated from the Diva Search, she received a developmental contract with WWE and was assigned to Deep South Wrestling, where she trained with Bill DeMott and Marty Jannetty ... Had short feuds with Kristal Marshall and Michelle McCool ... Also managed the Shane Twins and Palmer Canon ... Was released from her WWE contract in May 2006 ... Began wrestling in Japan under the name Panther Claw and as Black Barbie in Women's Extreme Wrestling ... Debuted in TNA in February at Against All Odds, where she distracted Petey Williams in his match against Steiner ... Currently manages both Steiner and Williams ... Rarely wrestles, but when she does, she is a force ... Competed in TNA's "Queen Of The Cage" match, which was won by Roxxi Laveaux ... Also competed in the "Makeover Battle Royal" at Sacrifice ... Favorite move is her unnamed hair-pull chokebomb ... Also uses a variation of the STFO in which she pulls on her opponent's hair, just to be nasty ... Can physically dominate every woman on the TNA roster, except Awesome Kong ... Priorities are split between wrestling and managing; if she ever truly committed to wrestling, she could rise quickly to the top of the Knockout division.

47 DANYAH

(5'8", 125, 3)

Photo by Buddy LaMantia

The "Sin City Vixen" is a professional fitness trainer with degrees in French and Kinesiology ... Also has five different fitness certifications ... Based out of Canada, though she is billed as being from Las Vegas ... A wrestling fan since childhood, Danyah met aspiring wrestler Tiana Ringer in a fitness class and was referred to Rob Fuego, the head trainer at Squared Circle Training ... Learned the fundamentals, then gradually began incorporating some lucha libre maneuvers into her repertoire . . . Managed one of her trainers, Johnny Devine, in a match against Psycho Sid in Ottawa in 2007 ... Has competed against the likes of Jaime D, Gail Kim, and Traci Brooks in Ontario's Blood, Sweat, and Ears promotion ... Had an extended feud with Cherry Bomb ... Takes incredible pride in her athletic physique and admits to being a bit of an exhibitionist, showing off the fruits of all the hard work she does in training ... Three-time Great Canadian Wrestling W.I.L.D. champion has also held the Pro Wrestling Xtreme women's title ... Captured the "Pure Wrestling Association Elite 8" tournament ... Favorite move is the meat tray (a bridged O'Connor roll-up) and the Danyahcanrana ... Also adept at a variety of armbar submission locks ... Continues to model when not wrestling and is a guest commentator for *Tha O Show*, an online radio program.

Jennifer BLAKE

(5'7", 126, 1)

98

Has been wrestling for little more than a year, but has several years experience as a valet, manager, interviewer, and commissioner on the indy circuit ... Native of Niagara Falls, Ontario, Blake wrestled her debut match against Curry Man of all people on a 2007 card in Toronto ... Longtime boyfriend Derek Wylde, legitimately proposed to her in the ring at Ballpark Brawl 2004 ... Made everyone forget that romantic moment when she fought Wylde last year in a bloody streetfight in Ontario's UWA Hardcore promotion ... The hard-fought affair earned Blake the admiration of the fans, prompting the UWA to book her against Sara Del Rey in the first women's match in the promotion's history ... Recently started grappling for SHIMMER ... Beat Haley Rogers in a strap match to win the PWX women's title ... Actually wanted to wrestle for years, but wasn't booked because promoters thought she was too sweet and soft-spoken to be an effective wrestler ... Has proved everyone wrong and is committed to making a name for herself as an athlete and not as just another pretty face ... Calls her main finisher the dynamite destroyer, a softer version of the Canadian destroyer piledriver ... Teams with LuFisto as The Suicide Blondes in LLW ... A true student of the game with a strong work ethic ... Other signature moves include a risky suicide dive, the lungblower, and the superkick.

49 DAFFNEY

(5'6", 130, 9)

Photo by Buddy LaMantia

Original scream queen was voted Carolina Female Wrestler of the Year last year in a fan poll ... Retired in 2004 after a knee injury but returned to the ring in 2006 ... First appeared in WCW in 1999 as David Flair's mentally disturbed girlfriend ... Held the cruiserweight title as co-champ with Crowbar in WCW ... Had to share the title due to a special stipulation in their match against Chris Candido and Tammy Sytch ... Beat Crowbar to become the undisputed cruiserweight champ ... Faced Stacy Keibler in a memorable "Wedding Gown" match after Stacy stole Flair away from her ... Released from WCW in 2001 and relocated to Florida ... Trained at Dusty Rhodes' Turnbuckle Championship Wrestling camp ... Appeared in TNA a few times in 2002, making an appearance as Shark Boy's valet, Shark Girl ... Showed up in Ring of Honor in 2003 as Lucy Furr, seconding the Second City Saints ... Defeated El Mexico to win the NWA Wrestle Birmingham junior heavyweight title in June 2006 ... Has also competed for Women's Extreme Wrestling as Lucy Furr ... Has teamed with both MsChif and Cheerleader Melissa in SHIMMER, and calls MsChif her "twin sister separated at birth" ... Has reprised the Shark Girl character in SHIMMER ... Regularly wrestles for ACW-IWA Texas ... Favors a huracanrana she calls the "Frankenscreamer" and a springboard inverted DDT as her main finishers.

Portia PEREZ

(5'4", 128, 4)

50

Photo by Buddy LaMantia

Spunky youngster began wrestling while still in high school, competing throughout Ontario and Quebec ... Still not old enough to buy a beer in America, Perez has traveled the globe and completed several European tours ... Trained at the Universal Wrestling Alliance and made her debut in 2004 ... Competed in several U.S. promotions in 2005, including the Heartland Wrestling Association and Cleveland All-Pro ... Made her first international tour in January 2006, wrestling in Ireland and England ... A few months later, she had a three-week run in Mexico, wrestling under a mask as Xtasis ... Wrestled in France's "Queen Of Chaos" tournament in 2006 ... Currently a regular in SHIMMER, where she teams with Nicole Matthews as The Canadian Ninjas ... Suffered a broken hand in a bout against MsChif in 2007 ... Instigated a feud with Allison Danger by targeting Danger's injured shoulder in a match in July ... Uses a pair of pickles as her primary pinning procedure, the kosher pickle (an inverted double-underhook facebuster) and the portly pickle (a flipping kosher pickle) ... Received training from Dave Dalton, Tyson Dux, Mikey Whipwreck, and Delirious ... Dangerous at any range, utilizing knee strikes when in tight to her opponent, and dropkicks and superkicks when at a distance.

TRADITION AT A CROSS

What Does The Future Hold For The New ROH

TEXT BY **AL CASTLE**
PHOTOS BY **SCOTT FINKELSTEIN**

IN SOME WAYS, the match fit like a glove on a Ring of Honor card. Here they were—two ROH warriors, battling it out in a bloody war in New York City's Hammerstein Ballroom.

As is the company's signature, the match was a showcase for the sport of wrestling at its purest. In the end, the 1,800 fans who watched the match on their feet exploded with jubilation at the crowning of a new champion.

Indeed, it had all the facets of a great Ring of Honor match. Only, it really wasn't one.

Rather, the August 2 match between ROH regulars Brent Albright and Adam Pearce was sanctioned by the National Wrestling Alliance—and in fact featured the first NWA heavyweight title change ever to take place in New York.

But perhaps more historically, the match—considered an instant classic by many of those who witnessed it—marked the culmination of a potentially groundbreaking alliance between two of wrestling's most influential companies, ROH and the NWA.

"The time was right for us to finally work together," said NWA promoter David Marquez, who was one of the first to congratulate "The Shooter" Brent Albright after he celebrated in the ring with his newly won NWA heavyweight championship belt—a freshly minted replica of the iconic red-strapped belt originally worn by Harley Race some 35 years ago.

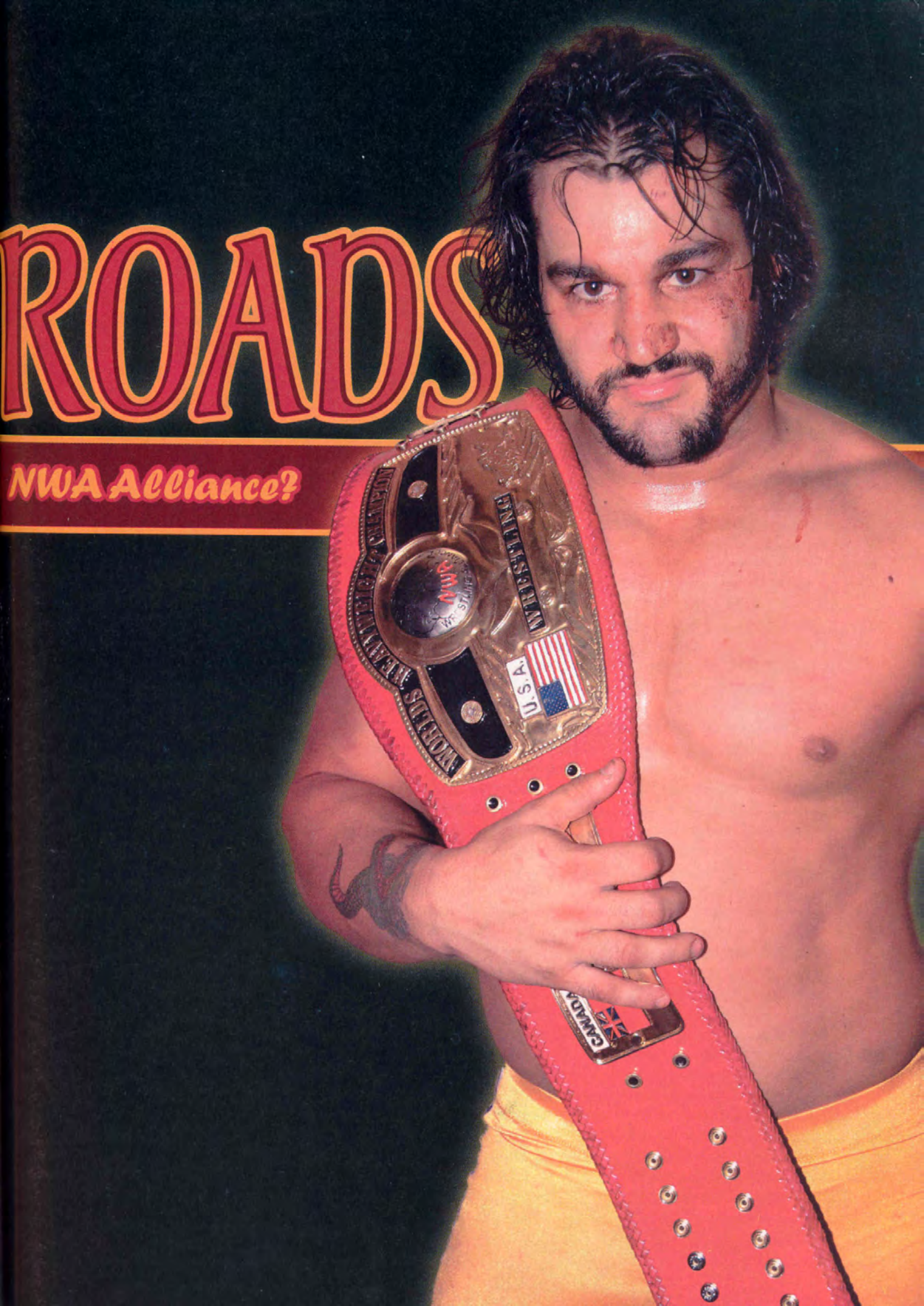
"I was proud to have Ring of Honor host the latest in a long line of great NWA heavyweight title matches, a match, in my opinion, that belongs right up there with Brisco vs. Race or Flair vs. Steamboat."

The landmark match, as well as the newly forged relationship with ROH, highlighted what Marquez and other NWA officials hope will be an extraordinary 60th anniversary for the National Wrestling Alliance.

The organization, which was once the most influential and powerful body of wrestling stars and promoters in the world, has, over the past two

ROADS

NWA Alliance?



The Brent Albright vs. Adam Pearce match at the Hammerstein Ballroom was much ballyhooed. Luckily for the fans in attendance, both men dug extra deep to put on an instant classic.

decades, struggled for its survival at times. But under the leadership of Marquez and Executive Director Bob Trobich, the NWA has, in the last several years, begun to recapture its place in the sport, featuring some of the country's most talented athletes and recognizable stars, including Bryan Danielson, Sean Waltman, and Sid Vicious.

Driving the NWA's latest resurgence is a thirst for nostalgia fueled in large part by WWE's promotion of the NWA brand through its WWE 24/7 On Demand program, Marquez said. Ric Flair also gave the NWA name a boost, Marquez said, when he brandished his original NWA heavyweight championship belt while building his WrestleMania feud with Shawn Michaels last spring.

The seeds of a coalition between the ROH and the NWA began last year, after the NWA ended its affiliation with TNA, which featured the NWA's heavyweight championship for five years. The NWA put the belt up for grabs in a tournament held over three months in 11 different states and two countries.

In the finals, Pearce defeated Albright to capture the vacant championship. But while the two men, along with other members of the ROH locker room, regularly competed in the NWA, ROH generally did not acknowledge the NWA or Pearce's title on its events.

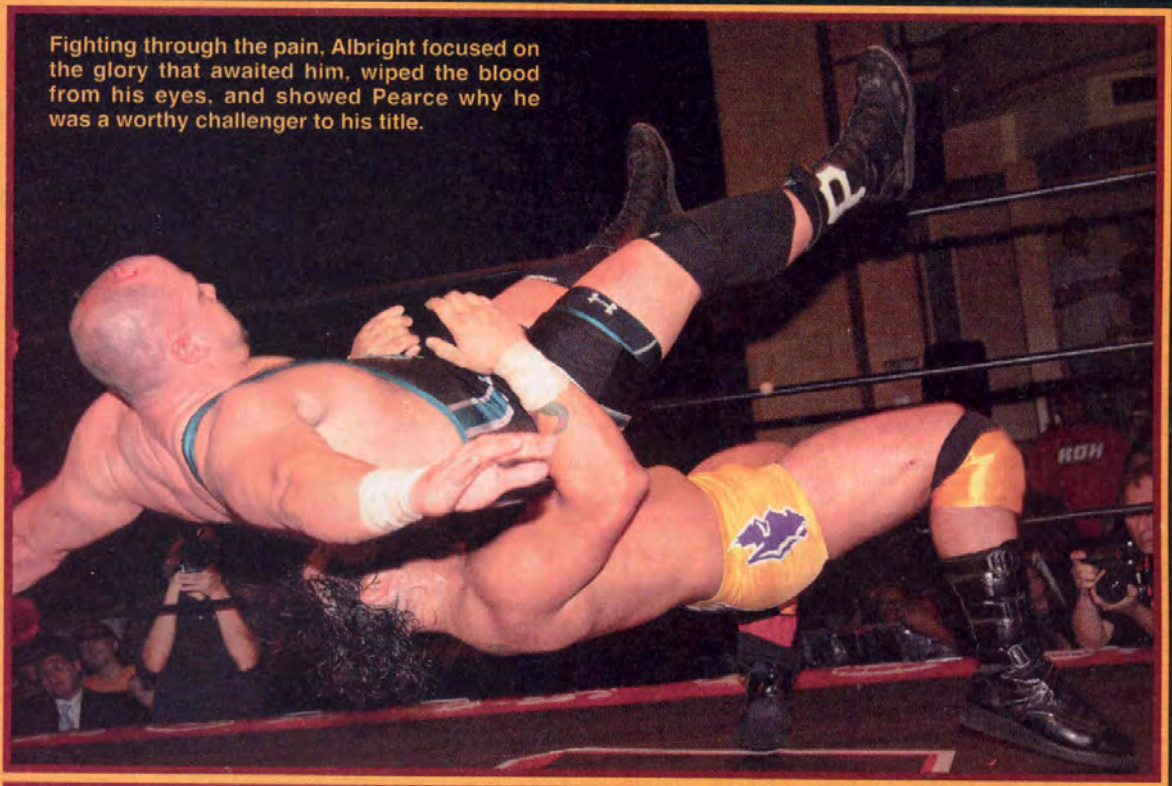
That changed earlier this year when Pearce began flashing his NWA championship belt on ROH shows, and even put it up in a title-vs.-title match against ROH heavyweight champion Nigel McGuinness in June. Pearce retained his belt by disqualification, but soon faced another challenge from the ROH locker room—Albright, his former partner-turned bitter rival, whom Pearce blinded with a fireball during a June event.

For Ring of Honor owner Cary Silkin, an ROH card in New York City was the perfect forum for a score-settling match between Pearce and Albright, even if it was for another company's championship.

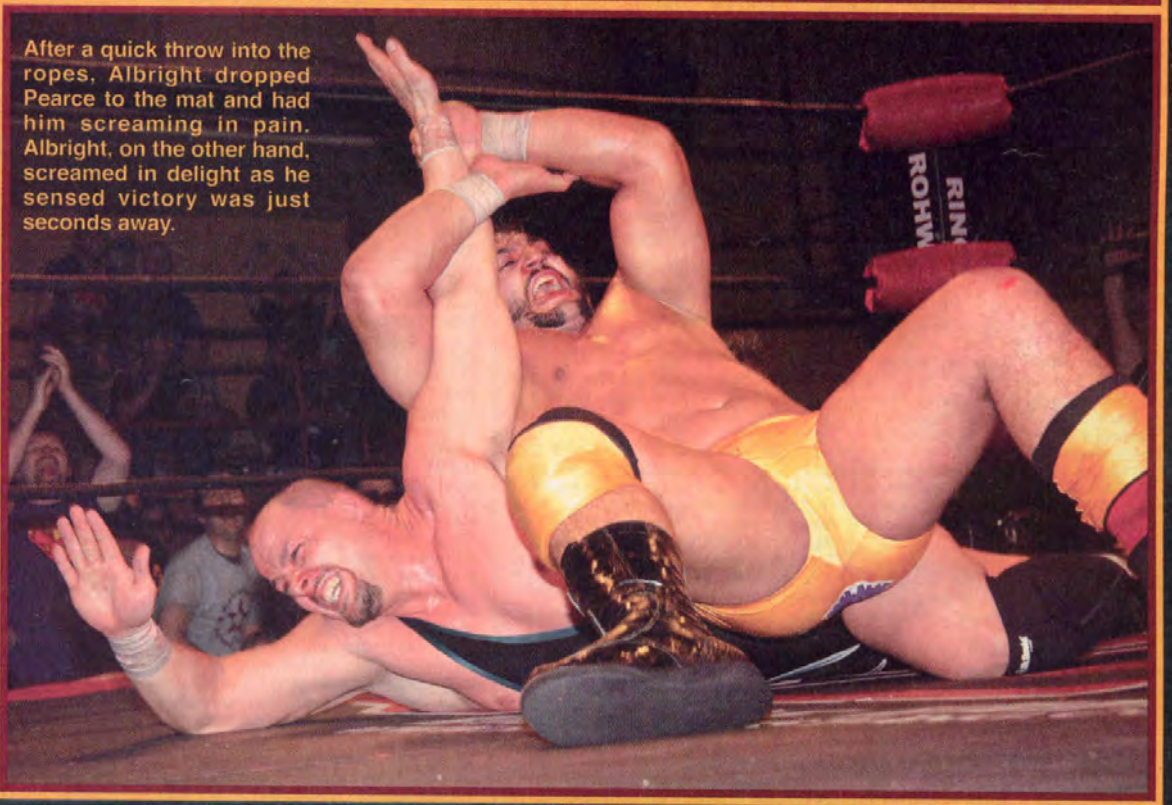
"Our competition is of the serious nature. Ring of Honor is definitely action and talent-based and features strong competition. And that definitely harkens back to the great NWA champions of the past," said Silkin. "We do feel our

"The Shooter," known mainly for his strong mat wrestling surprised the NWA champ with some unorthodox tactics. Apparently, Albright knew Pearce would be prepared for a strong ground attack.

Despite emerging with the NWA title, Albright had his share of painful moments against Adam Pearce. For example, Albright's impressive grappling skills were of little help against Pearce's right hand.



Fighting through the pain, Albright focused on the glory that awaited him, wiped the blood from his eyes, and showed Pearce why he was a worthy challenger to his title.



After a quick throw into the ropes, Albright dropped Pearce to the mat and had him screaming in pain. Albright, on the other hand, screamed in delight as he sensed victory was just seconds away.

titles mean something. And the NWA title and its legacy certainly mean a lot."

Both Marquez and Silkin said they don't know what the future has in store for the working relationship between their respective companies, but said fans can expect to see other NWA championship defenses at ROH events. What officials in both companies agree upon is that you won't be seeing a rivalry between ROH and NWA.

"Our business models are completely different," said Marquez. "They are more of the grass roots pro wrestling promotion that's building their own stars. We already have a championship that has 60 years of history."

Perhaps nobody was happier about how the historic match came about than Albright, who put on the performance of a lifetime en route to making Pearce tap out to an armbar, and receiving a star-making ovation from the crowd.

"Harley Race and Rick Steamboat and Ric Flair and Giant Baba and Jack Brisco," Albright said, "to be named in that elite group, to me, is a dream come true." □

INSIDE Wrestling BACK ISSUES

Be sure to fill in the gaps in your collection of "the magazine that rips the lid off pro wrestling!" INSIDE WRESTLING gives you all the information you need to keep up with the pro wrestling scene!

Avoid sellouts—order today!

April 1981: Bruno Sammartino Jr. Confesses: "It's Hell Carrying The Name Of My Father." Also: Bugsy McGraw, Capt. Lou Albano, Mongolian Stomper, Flair-Race.

May 1981: Hussein Arab vs. Ivan Koloff: A Bloody War Explodes In A Neutral Country. Also: Bob Backlund, Bobo Brazil, Santana & Bravo, David Von Erich-Race.

June 1983: Bob Backlund vs. John Studd: The Untold Story Behind Studd's Raw Deal. Also: Jim Garvin, Bockwinkel-Lawler, Bob Orton Jr.

Nov. 1983: We Sent Hulk Hogan To Cover Bockwinkel vs. Wahoo ... And All Hell Broke Loose! Also: James J. Dillon, Race-Kevin Von Erich, Paul Ellering, Reed-JYD.

April 1984: Rick Steamboat Quits Wrestling! The *Real* Story Behind His Most Painful Decision. Also: Masked Superstar-Mulligan, Adams-Garvin, Barry Windham, Ric Flair.

June 1984: Ric Flair On The Defensive: Is Mike Rotundo Ready To Take The NWA Title? Also: Ted DiBiase, Jim Cornette, Angelo Mosca Jr.

Aug. 1984: Junkyard Dog Joins Jim Valiant's Boogie Woogie Brigade. Also: Steve O-Zbyszko, Magnum-Wrestling II, Austin Idol, Sugar-Spoiler.

Sept. 1984: Rick Martel Dethrones Jumbo Tsuruta: Finally, An AWA Champion To Be Proud Of. Also: Brody-LeDuc, Iron Sheik, Kerry Von Erich, Rock 'n' Roll Express.

Oct. 1984: Collision Of The Florida Musclemen: Can Billy Jack Squeeze Superstar Graham Out Of Wrestling? Also: Road Warriors, Flair-Steamboat, Eddie Gilbert, Orndorff & Shultz-Atlas & Johnson.

Nov. 1984: Dusty Rhodes: Champion Of Champions ... And Still The Lord Of The Ring. Also: Rich-Gilbert, Gino Hernandez, Road Warriors, JYD-Reed.

Dec. 1984: How Hulkamania Trampled Big John Studd. Also: Road Warriors, Magnum T.A., Wahoo McDaniel, Sullivan-Rhodes.

March 1985: He's Back And Better Than Ever: Backlund-A-Mania Is Sweeping The Nation! Also: Koloffs, Billy Jack, Von Erichs-Devastation Inc.

Sept. 1985: A Psychologist Examines "Rowdy" Roddy Piper! Is He As Crazy As You Think He Is? Also: Magnum-Blanchard, Fantastics, Ric Flair, Gagne & Sammartino.

Jan. 1986: Rick Steamboat vs. Magnificent Muraco: The Volcano Rumbles. Also: Warriors & Ellering, Mike Von Erich, Jake Roberts, Koloff & Khrushchev-Rock 'n' Rolls.

June 1986: Barry Windham's NWA Mission: Humiliate Ric Flair! Also: Nord-Road Warriors, British Bulldogs, L. Von Erich-One Man Gang, Tully Blanchard.

Aug. 1986: WrestleMania 2: Hulk Hogan's Night Of Redemption. Also: Jim & Ron Garvin, Steve Williams, Rick Martel, Sir Oliver Humperdink.

Sept. 1986: Dusty Rhodes & Magnum T.A.: America's Team Is Not Out For Glory ... It's Out For Revenge! Also: Andre-Hogan, Chris Adams, Barry Windham, Scott Hall.

Dec. 1986: Rock 'n' Roll Revival: Morton And Gibson Regain The NWA World Tag Title! Also: Lex Luger, Hogan-Adonis, Hall-DeBeers, Baby Doll.

Jan. 1987: The New Roddy Piper: Why The Fans Love Him ... But Why They Should Hate Him! Also: Terry Taylor, Magnum T.A., Rude-Flair, Bam Bam Bigelow.

Feb. 1987: Hogan, Piper, Orndorff: The WWF's Hate Triangle. Also: Terry Taylor, Ric Flair, Midnight Rockers, Kevin Von Erich.

March 1987: Happy Anniversary, Hulk Hogan! The WWF Champion Celebrates Three Years At The Top. Also: Ric Flair, Missy-Gilbert, Lex Luger, Bulldogs, Koloffs.

April 1987: Steamboat & Windham: Manny Happy Returns! Also: Paul Ellering, Hacksaw Duggan, prospects.

May 1987: Barry Windham's Warning To Lex Luger: "Keep Away From The Four Horsemen." Also: Steamboat-Savage, Hogan-Andre, Freebirds & Sunshine, Williams-OMG, Midnight Rockers.

June 1987: Nikita Koloff's Mission: Saddle The Horsemen And Trample Lex Luger! Also: Roddy Piper, Adams & Taylor, Bruiser Brody, Scott Hall.

Aug. 1987: The Superpowers' Super Victory: Dusty Rhodes & Nikita Koloff Win The Crockett Cup. Also: Hulk Hogan, Lane & Cornette, Mike Von Erich, Adams & Taylor.

Oct. 1987: The Rock 'n' Roll Express Win Their Fourth NWA Title. Also: Hogan-Bigelow, Rhodes-Blanchard, scaffold, Kevin Sullivan.

Nov. 1987: Special Fan Poll: Should Mr. T Be Allowed To Referee? Also: War Games, Bulldogs, Condrey & Rose, Dusty Rhodes.

Dec. 1987: Rhodes Challenges Luger: Will Dusty's U.S. Title Hopes Split The Superpowers? Also: Hayes-Bubba, Magnum T.A., Randy Savage, Al Perez.

Jan. 1988: Is Hulk Hogan Bored With The WWF Title? Also: R&Rs-Horsemen, Flair-R. Garvin, Adrian Adonis, Steve Williams.

Feb. 1988: A Special Analysis By Jesse Ventura: Randy Savage Has Wimped Out! Also: Sting, R&Rs-Blanchard & Anderson, Kevin Von Erich, Dangerously-Lawler-Dundee.

March 1988: Bam Bam Bigelow: Wrestling's Most Dangerous Man. Also: Adams-Perez, Nikita Koloff, Honky Tonk, Freebirds.

May 1988: Million-Dollar Middleman: The Future Of The WWF Is In Ted DiBiase's Hands. Also: Zbyszko & Baby Doll, Road Warriors-Konga & Warlord, Fritz Von Erich, Rockers-Express.

June 1988: The Noble Savage: How Beauty Killed The Beast Within "The Macho Man." Also: Warriors-Warlord & Barbarian, R&R Express, Baby Doll, G. Gagne-Hennig.

July 1988: A Toast To Wrestling's Odd Couple: Kerry Von Erich & Michael Hayes Unite! Also: DiBiase-Savage-Hogan, Dillon & Horsemen, Sting, Rick Steamboat.

Aug. 1988: What Randy Savage Must Do To Escape The Shadow Of Hulk Hogan. Also: Hyatt-Gilbert, Sting, Michael Hayes, Honky Tonk.

Oct. 1988: Preview & Analysis: Megapowers vs. Megabucks. Also: Horsemen, Jerry Lawler, Warlord & Barbarian, Dangerously-Gilbert, Beefcake-Honky Tonk.

Nov. 1988: Dusty Rhodes vs. Barry Windham: The Night The Teacher Learned A Lesson. Also: Kerry-Lawler, Lex Luger, Muraco-Valentine, Freebirds.

Dec. 1988: Exclusive "Hotseat" Interview: Roddy Piper—Will He Ever Be Back? Also: Powers of Pain, Ultimate Warrior, Ric Flair, Bambi-Mystic, Kevin Von Erich.

Feb. 1989: Tully & Arn Will Fall Under Bobby Heenan! A Special Analysis By J.J. Dillon. Also: Hogan-Bossman, Sgt. Slaughter, Lawler-INSIDE WRESTLING, Davis-Wayne.

Aug. 1989: Your Ballots Are In: Hulkamania Rules! Also: Tanaka & Diamond, Rick Steamboat, Bigelow-Rhodes, Rick Rude, Jim Cornette.

Sept. 1989: Savage Is Shamed By Hogan—Only Elizabeth Can Save Him Now. Also: Lex Luger, Mil Mascaras, Dusty Rhodes, Bushwhackers, Skandor Akbar.

Oct. 1989: Dusty Rhodes' WWF Hit List. Also: Hall-Pillman-Vicious, Curt Hennig, Warriors, Terry Gordy, Kevin Von Erich.

Dec. 1989: The Dusty Road Is Paved With Gold: The American Dream Lives On! Also: Ric Flair, Hogan-Zeus, Embry-Chu-hi, Lex Luger, Larry Zbyszko.

Jan. 1990: Why Sting's Friendship Is Tearing Ric Flair Apart! Also: Roberts-DiBiase, Rock 'n' Rolls, Lawler-Embry, Hulk Hogan, Paul E. Dangerously.

Feb. 1990: Sex Symbol Showdown: Rude's Out ... Piper's In ... And The Fans Love It! Also: Warriors-Skyscrapers, Jimmy Snuka, Tom Zenk, Destruction Crew, Kerry Von Erich

April 1990: Starrcade '89: Night Of The Iron Men. Also: Warrior-Hogan, Dustin Rhodes, Buzz Sawyer, WWF shuffle.

June 1990: Tragedy Strikes Sting! How You Can Help Speed His Recovery. Also: Saito-Zbyszko, Earthquake, Ultimate Warrior, Jeff Jarrett.

July 1990: Our Urgent Plea To Hulk Hogan & The Ultimate Warrior: Team Up And Eliminate These Men. Also: Steiners, Sting, Earthquake, Kokina Maximus, Tessa.

Aug. 1990: The Experts Agree: Lex Luger Has Made Ric Flair A Broken Man. Also: Hulk Hogan, Ultimate Warrior, Pillman & Zenk, Terry Taylor, Jerry Lawler.

Sept. 1990: Fighting Fire With Fire: The Awesome Foursome—Committed To Destroying The Horsemen. Also: Hulk Hogan, Hacksaw Duggan, JYD, Adams-Jeannie, Midnight Express.

Oct. 1990: Sting: "I Feel Like I've Conquered The World!" Also: Legion of Doom, Bushwhackers, El Gigante, Mike Rotundo, Juice Patrol.

Nov. 1990: Ric Flair & Hulk Hogan: A Tale Of Two Ex-Champions. Also: Sid Vicious, Sgt. Slaughter, Jeannie-Toni, Mr. Fuji & Orient Express.

Dec. 1990: Halloween Havoc Horror! Why Sting Is Spooked By Sid Vicious. Also: Hulk Hogan, Kerry Von Erich, Jim Cornette, Larry Zbyszko.

Jan. 1991: Warning To The Ultimate Warrior: The Legion Of Doom Will Lead You To Destruction. Also: Paul E. Dangerously, Chris Adams, Steiners, Lawler-T. Funk.

Feb. 1991: Our Plan For The "Hulkster" To Regain The WWF World Belt. Also: Terry Taylor, Rick Martel, Sting & Simmons, all-annoying, Stan Hansen.

March 1991: The Earthquake Feud Rumbles On: Will Hulk Hogan Be The Victim Of His Own Deadly Obsession? Also: Roberts-Martel, Sting-Hansen, Keirn-Perez, Barry Windham.

April 1991: The Steiners: They'd Be Wrestling's Greatest Tag Team, But ... Also: Eddie Gilbert, Flair-Sting, Steiners, Roddy Piper, Larry Zbyszko, Sgt. Slaughter.

June 1991: Steiners, LOD: Tag Team Thunder. Also: Steve Williams, Nikita Koloff, I-C belt, Dundees, Arn Anderson.

July 1991: Hogan's Burning Mad! Beating Slaughter For The Title Was Not Enough. Also: Virgil, Nastys, Steiners, Dan Spivey, Terry Funk.

Aug. 1991: Are The Steiners Getting Too Cocky For Their Own Good? Also: Jerry Lawler, Rick Steamboat, Warrior-Undertaker, Dustin Rhodes, Flair-Windham.

Sept. 1991: Justice Is In The WWF ... And Hogan's In The Biggest Trouble Of His Life! Also: Missy-Paul E., Rick Rude, Curt Hennig, Stevie Ray, Diamond Exchange.

Oct. 1991: Exclusive Preview & Analysis: SummerSlam '91. Also: Savage & Liz, Hogan & Warrior, Leg Luger, Santana-Atlas, Steve Williams, Studd-Zenk.

Nov. 1991: Our Investigation Reveals ... The Truth Behind The Hogan-Savage Connection. Also: Lex Luger, Ric Flair, War Games, Mounties, foreign objects.

Dec. 1991: A Night To Remember: SummerSlam Provides Heat For The Cold Months Ahead. Also: Alexandra York, Simmons-Luger, Lane & Cornette, Leatherface.

Jan. 1992: INSIDE WRESTLING Reveals: Sting's Memo From A Maniac! Also: Freebirds, Blackhearts, Bret Hart, Dusty Rhodes, Mike Rotundo.

March 1992: Who's Winning The Hogan-Flair Wars? Also: Steiners, Survivor Series, Enforcers-Rhodes & Steamboat, Johnny B. Badd.

May 1992: War! WrestleMania Will Be Sid And Hulk's Battleground. Also: Jushin Liger, Eddie Gilbert, Repo Man, Austin-Blossom, Tri-State & UWF.

June 1992: Sting: A New Champion, A New Era. Also: Hulk Hogan, Harley Race, Marcus Bagwell, Tony Atlas, IRS & DiBiase.

July 1992: Is Regaining The WWF Title An Impossible Undertaking? Also: Sherri & Shawn, Big Van Vader, Gordy & Williams, Kamala, Joe Savoldi.

Aug. 1992: The Closer Flair Gets ... The More Savage "Macho Man" Becomes. Also: Jack-Badd, Brian Christopher, LOD & Ellering, Taylor & Valentine, Dusty Wolfe.

Sept. 1992: Hulk Hogan's "Retirement": Why The WWF Will Never Let Him Rest In Peace. Also: War Games, Big Van Vader, Kamala, Marty Jannetty, U.K.

Oct. 1992: SummerSlam '92: Exclusive Preview & Analysis. Also: S. Steiner-Muta, Ron Simmons, Eddie Gilbert, Eric Embry.

Nov. 1992: The Great American Crash: Vader Crushes Sting For The WCW World Title. Also: Ric Flair, Ultimate Warrior, Madusa, Warlord & Barbarian-Bushwhackers, top rope rule.

Dec. 1992: Hey, Ric Flair: Stop Whining And Start Winning. Also: Razor Ramon, Heavenly Bodies, Jeff Jarrett, Windham & D. Rhodes, NWA title.

March 1993: Who Controls The Balance Of Power In The WWF? Also: Shawn Michaels, Nikita Koloff, Windham-Dustin, Survivor Series, Rod Price.

April 1993: New Blood! The Wrestlers Who Could Revitalize The WWF In '93. Also: Z-Man & Gunn, Sting-Vader, Dangerous Alliance, Ric Flair.

May 1993: Exclusive WrestleMania IX Match Analysis. Also: Andre the Giant, Pillman & Austin, Great Muta, Headshrinkers-Steiners, 2 Cold Scorpio.

Jan. 1994 (Special Edition): Wrestling's Seasonal Spectaculars—WWF SummerSlam, WCW Fall Brawl. Also: Rick Martel, Razor Ramon, Steven Regal, Paul Orndorff, Mascaras-Liger, ECW baseball bat matches.

July 1994 (Special Issue): A Look Into Wrestling's Future: You Won't Believe What You'll See! Also: Ron Simmons, Sting, Earthquake-Booger, Bob Armstrong, Diesel.

Oct. 1994 (Special Issue): WCW Midyear Report. Also: Doink, Vader-Race, Mabel, Dory Funk Jr., Owen-Bret, Hall of Fame.

June 1995: The Beginning Of The End? Will Hulk Hogan Get Burned By Friendly Fire? Also: Steve Austin, Gangstas, Public Enemy, Bret-Owen, Jeff Jarrett.

Oct. 1995 (Special Issue): WCW Midyear Report. Also: Randy Savage, Bret & Cactus, Sting, Diesel, Hawk.

Nov. 1995: One Defense In Four Months?! Strip Hulk Hogan Of The Title—Now! Also: Alex Wright, Tatanka, King of Ring, Chris Benoit, Backlund-Clinton.

Jan. 1996: Our Holiday Wish List For 1996! Also: Scott Norton, Sid Vicious, Psicosis-Misterio, Barry Horowitz, Sabu.

Feb. 1996: Wrestling's Top Stars: What 1996 Has In Store For Them! Also: Goldust, Sherri-Parker, Mikey Whipwreck, Smokin' Gunns.

March 1996: His Excellency! How Bret Masterminded Diesel's Execution. Also: Jeff Jarrett, Giant, Jim Cornette, Survivor Series, Eddie Guerrero.

June 1996: Luger Or Hogan? If Sting Makes The Wrong Choice, He's

Through! Also: Road Warriors, Roddy Piper, Ahmed Johnson, Raven, Al Snow

Nov. 1996: The Steiners: Feasting On A Buffet Of Violence. Also: Shawn Michaels, Sabu-Douglas, King of Ring, Eddie Guerrero, truck stop terror.

Dec. 1996: Three Women For Four Horsemen? The Hot Search For A Fourth Filly Has Begun! Also: Sunny & Gunns, Giant, Goldust, Cornette & Hart, Jerry Jarrett.

Holiday 1996 (Special Issue): The Tombstone: Wresling's Deadliest Finisher. Also: 1997 calendar, "Pyscho" Sid, Benoit-Misterio, Steiners-NWO, Pit Bull I, Jushin Liger.

June 1997: Ahmed Johnson Reveals: "I Almost Joined The Nation Of Domination." Also: Mankind, Lex Luger, NWO, Davey Boy Smith, Jerry Graham.

Oct. 1997 (Special Issue): WCW Midyear Report. Also: LOD-PG-13, Rob Van Dam, Flair & Horsemen, Ken Shamrock, McMichael-White, Madd & Mama Maxxine.

Holiday 1997 (Special Issue): The Steiners' Million-Dollar Gamble! Also: 1998 calendar, Alex Wright, The Patriot, Sgt. Slaughter, Turnbuckle Turkey Awards.

April 1998 (Special Issue): The 1998 Inside Wrestling Computer Tournament. Also: Scott Hall, Marlena, Chris Benoit, Gunn & James, Sabu-Sandman.

May 1998: Is The WWF Screwing Another Hart? Also: Steve Austin, Dallas Page, Booker T, Larry Zbyszko, Al Snow.

June 1998: Exclusive! Steve Austin: The 10 Men Who Inspired His Toughness. Also: Dusty & Dustin, Perry Saturn, Mortis, Jeff Jarrett.

July 1998 (Special Issue): Top Stars Answer Your Personal Questions. Also: Jericho-Misterio Jr., Steve Austin, Sunny, Scott Steiner, Christopher-Michinoku.

Aug. 1998: WrestleMania XIV: The *Real* Winners And Losers. Also: Sunny, Curt Hennig, Dan Severn, Ultimo Dragon.

Sept. 1998: Power Surge! While The NWO Fiddles ... These Men Are Burning. Also: Sable, Ultimo-Guerrero, DeGeneration X-Owen, Rocky Maivia, Mad Russian-Rambo.

Oct. 1998 (Special Issue): WCW Midyear Report. Also: Steve Austin, Taka Michinoku, Al Snow, Hollywood Hogan, Roddy Piper, Misawa-Kawada.

Nov. 1998: Austin vs. Goldberg: Who Would Win And Why. Also: Bret Hart, Dude Love, Junkyard Dog, Helmsley-Michaels, Ray-Booker.

Dec. 1998: DDP's Big Bang Theories: Cutting Loose On Life, Love, & The Ultimate Buzz. Also: Sable-Jackie, Mankind, Hogan-Horace, D-Lo, APW.

Holiday 1998 (Special Issue): Kane: Still Haunted By His Day Of Glory. Also: Eddie Guerrero, Stevie Ray, Val Venis, Turnbuckle Turkey Awards, bonus calendar.

Jan. 1999: Seasons Greetings With A Bang (DDP & Kimberly). Also: Severn-Shamrock, Konnan, Arn, Undertaker-Kane, Chris Jericho.

March 1999: Estrange Situation! Insider Reveals: "Shane Still Resents His Father! Also: X-Pac, Hogan-Warrior, Jesse Ventura, Billy Kidman, Scott Norton.

April 1999 (Special Issue): The 1999 Inside Wrestling Computer Tournament. Also: Bossman-McMahon, Steiner & Bischoff, Hollywood Hogan, Wrath, Blue Meanie.

May 1999: Team Corporate's WrestleMania Scare! Mankind's Title Victory Could Have Spoiled Everything! Also: New Age Outlaws, Eddie Guerrero, Triple-H, Bill Goldberg.

June 1999: Still In-Vince-Ible! What Will It Take To Topple This Man? Also: Rey Misterio Jr., ECW, Triple-H, NWO, Blue Meanie.

July 1999 (Special Issue): Top Stars Answer Your Personal Questions. Also: Vince McMahon, Vincent, Eric Bischoff, Giant Baba.

Aug. 1999: WrestleMania XV: The *Real* Winners And Losers! Also: Vam Dam-Lynn, Saturn, Goldust, Steiner-Bagwell.

Oct. 1999 (Special Issue): WCW Midyear Report. Also: Mankind & Shamrock, Snow-Holly, Sting, Edge, Flair-Robinson, AIWF.

Nov. 1999: Crash At The Bash! Enter Sid, Viciously! Also: Undertaker-Austin, Acolytes, Master P, Debra, Justin Credible.

Dec. 1999: The Rock: What Makes You Love/Hate This Man? Also: Sting, Shane Douglas, Droz, Piper-Bagwell, Taz.

Holiday 1999 (Special Issue): The 1999 Turnbuckle Turkey Awards. Also: Sting, Dogg-Gunn, Undertaker, Steve Corino, 2000 calendar.

Jan. 2000: Dreaming Of An Extreme Christmas (Tommy Dreamer & Francine). Also: Goldberg, Al Snow, Billy Gunn, Doring & Road Kill, cigar-chompers.

Feb. 2000: Wrestling's Top Stars: What's Ahead For 2000! Also: Vince-Bulldog, Mike Awesome, Sid Vicious, Gorilla Monsoon.

March 2000: Kevin Nash & Scott Hall: Getting Inside The Outsiders' Heads. Also: Dudleys, Jerry Lynn, Vince-DX, Kimberly, Zero Gravity.

April 2000 (Special Issue): The Y2K Computer Tournament. Also: Jarrett-PTB, Christopher & Taylor, Lou E. Dangerously, Lawler-Fantastico.

May 2000: Hey, Scott, Watch Your Back! The NWO Is Setting You Up! Also: Hacksaw Duggan, Rikishi Phatu, Test, Mike Awesome.

June 2000: Chris Jericho's Deadliest Enemy: His Ego! Also: Tazz, Kidman-Torrie, Nash-Funk, Buff Bagwell, New Jack.

July 2000 (Special Issue): It's True! Kurt Angle Will Be Hotter Than The Rock In Six Months! Also: Elizabeth, Steve Blackman, Norman Smiley, Spike Dudley, personal questions.

Aug. 2000: WrestleMania 2000: The *Real* Winners & Losers! Also: Dustin-Funk, Eddie Guerrero, ECW extreme?, WCW analysis.

Sept. 2000: Those Damn Dudleys! Is There An Evil Act Fans Won't Cheer? Also: Billy Kidman, Taka Michinoku, Yoshihiro Tajiri, Jeff Jarrett.

Oct. 2000 (Special Issue): WCW Midyear Report. Also: Kurt Angle, Malenko-Saturn, Lance Storm, Tori, Jumbo Tsuruta, ECW headliners.

Nov. 2000: When Will Triple-H Proclaim ... "I'm Sick Of Being A McMahon!" Also: Trish Stratus, Shane Douglas, Hulk Hogan, Kevin Nash, Yoshihiro Tajiri. [FULL-COLOR BEGINNING WITH JANUARY 2001]

Jan. 2001: Olympic Games: What Kind Of Angle Has Curt Been Running? Also: Tazz-Lawler, Big Vito, Stacy Keibler, Chris Benoit, Kid Kash, Chyna.

March 2001: Who Knows The Rock's Role? Is He Ditching Wrestling For Hollywood? Also: Trish Stratus, Billy Gunn, Jarrett-Sting, C.W. Anderson, Booker T.

May 2001: The WrestleMania Tip Sheet: What You Must Know About The Event Of The Year! Also: Scott Steiner, Dudleys, Malenko & Lita, Shane Douglas, Raven.

Aug. 2001: Game Face! We Haven't Seen Hunter's Ugly Side ... But Just Wait! Also: WWF vs. WCW, Kurt Angle, Vince McMahon, Booker T, Hardys & Lita, Haas brothers, WCW babes.

Dec. 2001: The WWF-WCW Dream Matches We Really Want! Also: Tazz, Dudleys, Perry Saturn, Johnny Valentine, 100 WCW facts.

Feb. 2002: RVD: The Story You've Been Missing For 10 Years! Also: Hardys, Randy Orton, Shawn Stasiak, Turnbuckle Turkey Awards.

April 2002: Feud Alert! The Lowdown On 2002's Hotest Showdowns! Also: Rikishi, Stacy Keibler, Shane Helms, 2001 report cards.

June 2002: Special Comeback Issue: Triple-H, Chris Benoit, Kevin Nash. Also: Chris Jericho, Howard Stern, hypothetical unification showdowns.

Aug. 2002: WrestleMania X8: The *Real* Winners And Losers. Also: Hulk Hogan, Scott Steiner, Jamie Noble, Jarrett-Christopher, All-Japan.

Oct. 2002: Dark Side Be Damned! Undertaker's At His Best As Himself! Also: Ric Flair, Triple-H, Wahoo McDaniel, Goldberg, WWE-Hollywood.

Dec. 2002: The Impossible Dream, Part 2: Can Angle Win Another Olympic Gold? Also: Shane McMahon, PTC-WWE, Trish Stratus, Malice, next best things.

Feb. 2003: HBK's Miracle Comeback: Will The Fans Let Him Make The Smart Choice? Also: Edge, RVD, Chuck & Billy, Russ Haas Memorial, Turnbuckle Turkeys.

April 2003: Big Poppa Pump: On A Dirty Mission To Clean Up WWE. Also: Ron Killings, Big Show, WWE agents, report cards.

June 2003: Grabbing For Greatness: Triple-H's Desperate Quest For Immortality. Also: Abdullah, Shawn Michaels, Chris Benoit, WCW winners & losers.

Aug. 2003: WrestleMania XIX: The Supercard That Changed The Course Of History! Also: Rene Dupree, The Hurricane, Chris Jericho, Team Angle, injuries.

Oct. 2003: Done? Don't Count On It! Stone-Cold Will Die If He Can't Fight! Also: Kliq, Miss Elizabeth, D-Lo Brown, FBI, WWE nostalgia.

Dec. 2003: The 10 Most Respectable Wrestlers Who Get No Respect. Also: Dragon vs. Misterio, Hulk Hogan, Lance Storm, Sting, Lawler vs. Rhodes.

Feb. 2004: The Game vs. Da Man: The Death War That's Too Brutal To Last! Also: Undertaker, Kane-Shane, Shaniqua, Briscoes vs. Briscos, Turnbuckle Turkeys.

April 2004: The Raw vs. Smackdown Super Bowl Party: WWE Will Never Be The Same! Also: Tajiri, Maven, Carly Colon, Raw report cards.

June 2004: Who Can Tame The Beast That Is Batista? Also: Hardcore Holly, Michael Shane, Chavo-Eddie, "McSpansion's" 20th anniversary.

Aug. 2004: WrestleMania Alumni Agree: Randy Orton's Life Is Changed Forever! Also: Eddie Guerrero, Hall & Nash, Chris Benoit, insiders' poll.

Nov. 2004: John Cena: Do We Need To Hate Him To Love Him? Also: Shelton Benjamin, Steamboat-Punk, Chavo Classic, A.J. Styles, Jonathan Coachman, William Regal, OVW streetfight.

Feb. 2005: Why Randy Orton Will Succeed Where Brock Lesnar Failed. Also: JBL, Batista, Dudleys, Striker, Jeff Hardy, Turnbuckle Turkeys.

May 2005: The Return Of Brock Lesnar: Is BL The Only Man To Take Out JBL? Also: Maven, Hardcore Holly, Lita, TNA, Raw report cards.

Aug. 2005: Head Trips: How Long Can Helmsley Endure The Pressure? Also: Ric Flair, Jeff Hardy, M-N-M vs. Dudleys, WrestleMania, insiders' poll.

Nov. 2005: ECW Reunion 2005: Ready To Change The Face Of Wrestling ... Again! Also: Christian, Orlando Jordan, Raven, Randy Orton, Viscera, WWE women.

Feb. 2006: Shawn Of A New Day: HBK Enters The Scariest Phase Of His Career. Also: New Age Outlaws, Melina, Matt Striker, WrestleReunion II, Lord Al Hayes, Turnbuckle Turkeys.

INSIDE WRESTLING

ONLY $5 EACH (Plus Postage & Handling!)

Send To: SPORTS & ENTERTAINMENT PUBLICATIONS LLC
BOX 910 FT. WASHINGTON, PA 19034

☐APR 81	☐MAY 87	☐FEB 90	☐JUL 92	☐NOV 97	☐FEB 00	☐AUG 03
☐MAY81	☐JUN 87	☐APR 90	☐AUG 92	☐HOL 97	☐MAR 00	☐OCT 03
☐JUN 83	☐JUL 87	☐JUN 90	☐SEP 92	☐APR 98	☐APR 00	☐DEC 03
☐NOV83	☐AUG 87	☐JUL 90	☐OCT 92	☐MAY 98	☐MAY 00	☐FEB 04
☐APR 84	☐SEP 87	☐AUG 90	☐NOV 92	☐JUN 98	☐JUN 00	☐APR 04
☐JUN 84	☐OCT 87	☐SEP 90	☐DEC 92	☐JUL 98	☐JUL 00	☐JUN 04
☐AUG 84	☐NOV 87	☐OCT 90	☐MAR 93	☐AUG 98	☐AUG 00	☐AUG 04
☐SEP 84	☐DEC 87	☐NOV 90	☐APR 93	☐SEP 98	☐SEP 00	☐NOV 04
☐OCT 84	☐JAN 88	☐DEC 90	☐MAY 93	☐OCT 98	☐OCT 00	☐FEB 05
☐NOV 84	☐FEB 88	☐JAN 91	☐JAN 94	☐NOV 98	☐NOV 00	☐MAY 05
☐DEC 84	☐MAR 88	☐FEB 91	☐JUL 94	☐DEC 98	☐JAN 01	☐AUG 05
☐MAR 85	☐MAY 88	☐MAR 91	☐OCT 94	☐HOL 98	☐MAR 01	☐NOV 05
☐JUN 85	☐JUN 88	☐APR 91	☐JUN 95	☐JAN 99	☐MAY 01	☐FEB 06
☐SEP 85	☐JUL 88	☐JUN 91	☐OCT 95	☐MAR 99	☐AUG 01	
☐JAN 86	☐AUG 88	☐JUL 91	☐NOV 95	☐APR 99	☐DEC 01	
☐JUN 86	☐OCT 88	☐AUG 91	☐JAN 96	☐MAY 99	☐FEB 02	
☐AUG 86	☐NOV 88	☐SEP 91	☐FEB 96	☐JUN 99	☐APR 02	
☐SEP 86	☐DEC 88	☐OCT 91	☐MAR 96	☐JUL 99	☐JUN 02	
☐OCT 86	☐FEB 89	☐NOV 91	☐JUN 96	☐AUG 99	☐AUG 02	
☐DEC 86	☐AUG 89	☐DEC 91	☐NOV 96	☐OCT 99	☐OCT 02	
☐JAN 87	☐SEP 89	☐JAN 92	☐DEC 96	☐NOV 99	☐DEC 02	
☐FEB 87	☐OCT 89	☐MAR 92	☐HOL 96	☐DEC 99	☐FEB 03	
☐MAR 87	☐DEC 89	☐MAY 92	☐JUN 97	☐HOL 99	☐ APR 03	
☐APR 87	☐JAN 90	☐JUN 92	☐OCT 97	☐JAN 00	☐JUN 03	

In case of a sellout, indicate substitute choice: _____

Please send me the back issues I have checked off. I have enclosed $5 for each issue (plus $2 each for postage and handling) as payment in full or provided my credit card number to charge my purchase.

Please indicate method of payment:

☐ Check or money order
(enclosed and payable to Sports & Entertainment Publications LLC)

☐ VISA # _____

☐ MasterCard # _____

Expiration Date: ___/___ (MO YR) ___ ___ ___ (3 DIGIT SECURITY CODE)

Signature: _____

Name _____
(PRINT YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS CLEARLY)

Address _____

City _____

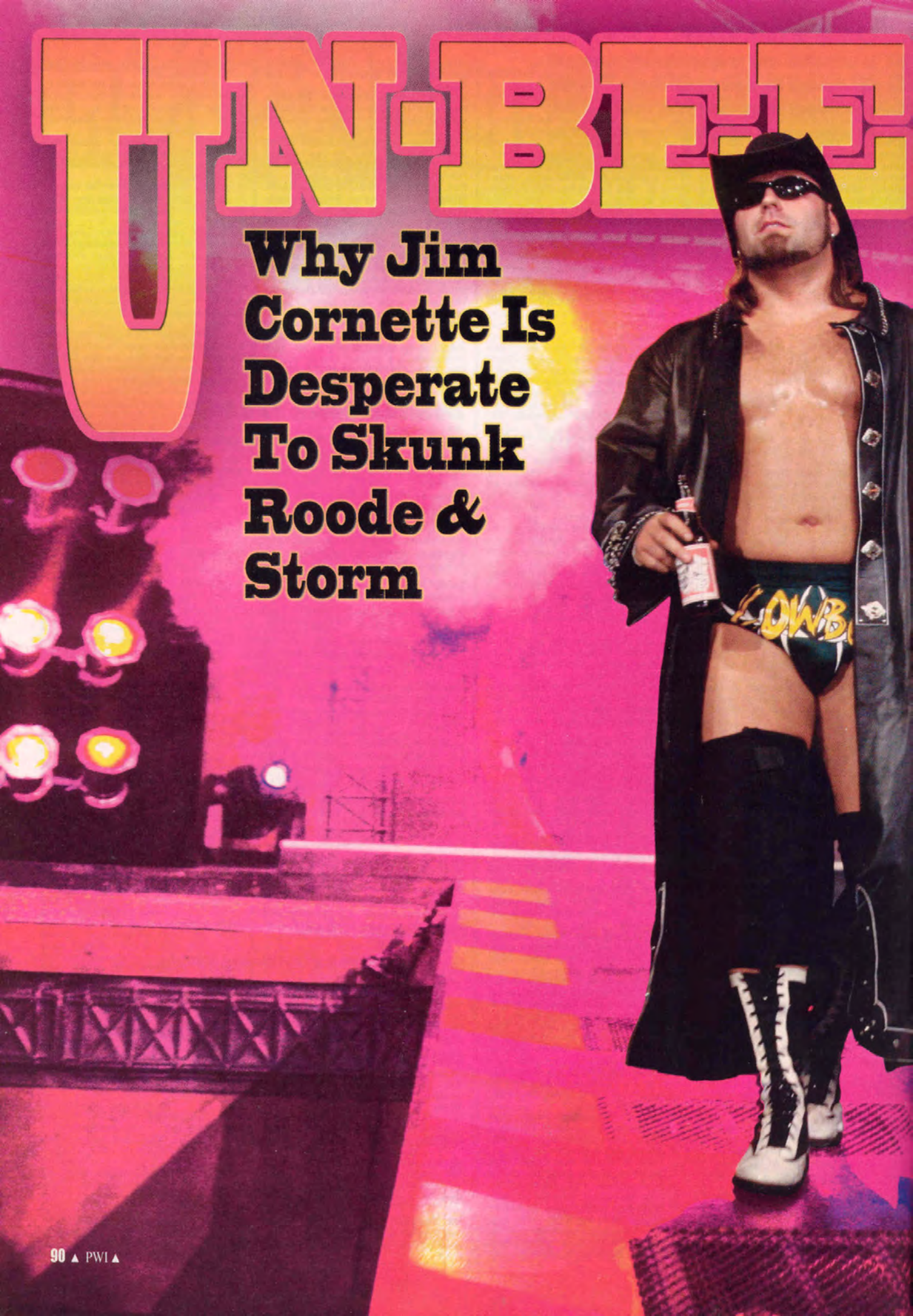
State _____ Zip _____ Email _____

For Canadian and Mexican orders, the postage and handling charge is $3 per issue (air-mail). For all other countries, the postage and handling charge is $7.50 per issue (air-mail). Int'l money order in U.S. funds only. Please allow 6-8 weeks for delivery.

7787/07.06

UN-BEE

Why Jim Cornette Is Desperate To Skunk Roode & Storm



R-ABLE!

TEXT BY **MICHAEL MOORE**
PHOTOS BY **LEE SOUTH/TNA WRESTLING**

JAMES STORM TOOK a swig from a beer bottle and grimaced as the raw, red skin on his back throbbed with pain.

The Reliant Arena locker room was full of wrestlers for TNA's Victory Road pay-per-view on July 13, but Storm and Robert Roode had only Jim Cornette on their minds.

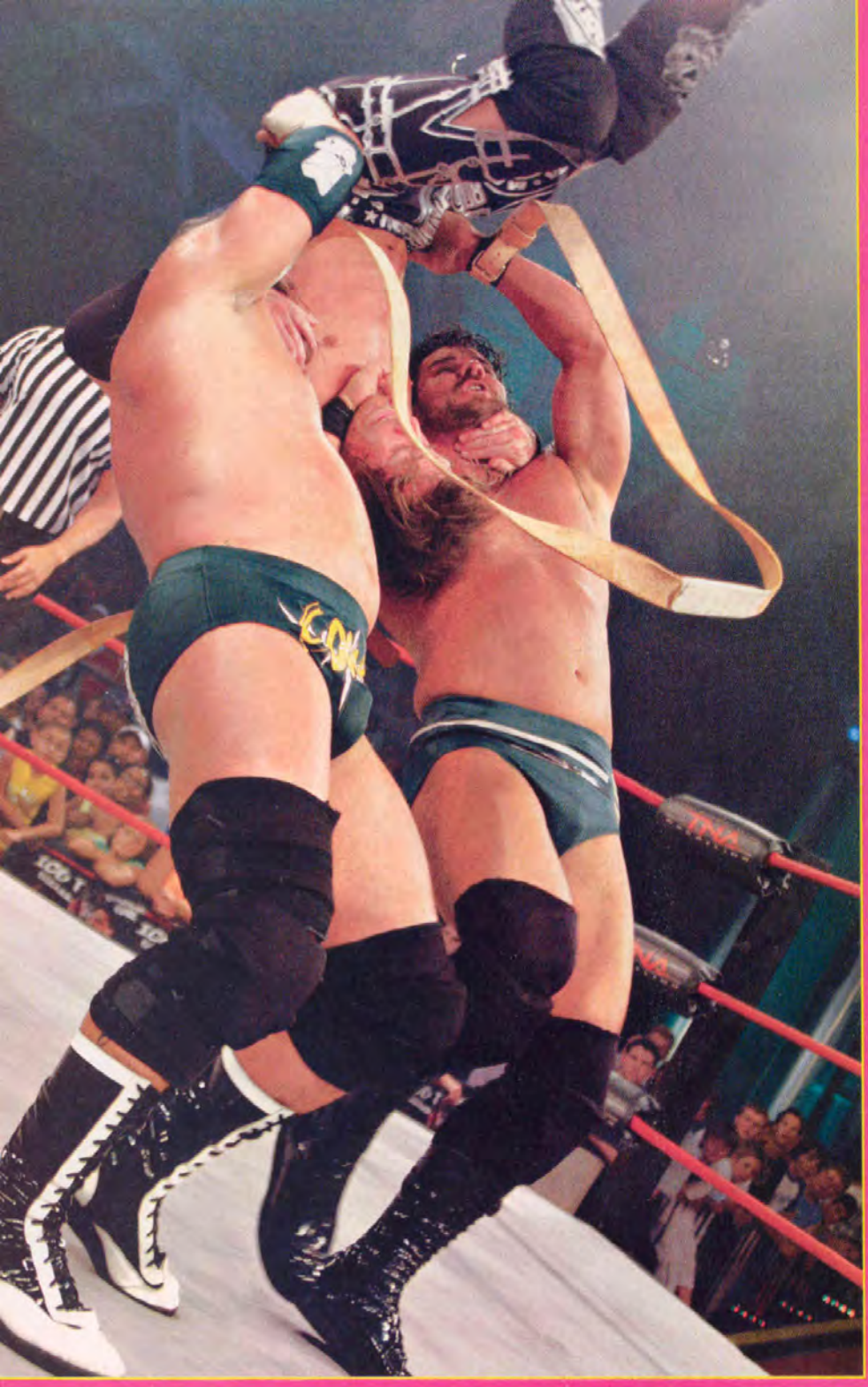
"If Cornette thinks this is over, he's crazy," Storm shouted, throwing his bottle against the wall. "We ain't even got started yet!"

The fans' revenge match at Victory Road in Houston was supposed to be Beer Money Inc.'s comeuppance after several weeks of taking leather straps to their opponents; it was Cornette's way of putting a stop to Storm and Roode's post-match beatdowns. Instead, the match proved to be a catalyst for even more violence.

In the weeks following Victory Road, Storm and Roode took the straps to everyone from Hector Guerrero to The Motor City Machine Guns. They've spared no one from their violent rampage, going as far as to whip innocent bystanders outside of the Impact Zone.

"Jim Cornette has nobody to blame but himself for what happens from now on," Roode said. "He invited the fans into this. He put us in a strap match with Chris Sabin and Alex Shelley. Their blood is on his hands, not ours."

During the last two years he's spent in a management position with TNA, control is something Cornette has rarely had. But few TNA superstars have gotten under his skin quite like Roode and Storm.



With or without their handy straps, James Storm and Robert Roode make a formidable tag team, as Chris Sabin can attest. That's why so many fans regard Beer Money Inc.'s post-match beatdowns as unnecessary.

More and more action seems to be taking place after the bell in TNA, but few wrestlers have settled into a ritual of violence quite like Beer Money Inc.

Cornette openly invited fans to send in videos describing why they'd like to whip the members of Beer Money Inc., and then selected the 10 most deranged and disturbed entries and invited them to take their shots at Storm and Roode.

He's enlisted help from teams like Sabin and Shelley and Samoa Joe and Kevin Nash, hoping one of those teams would do enough damage to put an end to Beer Money Inc.'s sadistic fondness for whipping opponents. To date, nothing's worked. Even after Roode and Storm unleashed their fury on Guerrero, his protégés, Homicide and Hernandez, did little to seek out Beer Money Inc. and extract any sort of revenge. In fact, Homicide and Hernandez weren't even sufficiently motivated to successfully defend their World tag team title a few weeks later at the Hard Justice pay-per-view.

"I don't know what it is with these guys," Cornette said. "They're both acting like a couple of spoiled brats. They walk around the place like they're entitled to something, and when they don't get it, they throw a fit and start whipping anyone who crosses their path. Maybe if their daddies would have whipped them a long time ago, we wouldn't be in the mess we're in right now."

Roode laughed at Cornette's comments.

"This is the same guy who made his living smacking guys with a tennis racket when their backs were turned," he said. "The same guy who stood on TV talking about what his mama was gonna do for him every week. Now all of a sudden he's the moral conscience of professional wrestling? Give me a break."

Could it be that Cornette looks at Beer Money Inc. and catches a glimpse of The Midnight Express and The Heavenly Bodies, two teams from his past?

"Jealousy, that's what it is," Storm said. "He looks at us and remembers what it was like to be a star—especially now that we own the tag team title. He ran his mouth for a lot of years hiding behind guys like Stan Lane and Bobby Eaton and made himself the center of attention. Now he's sitting behind a desk pushing pencils and kissing the butts of people like Dixie Carter. He sees what we're doing and just wishes he could be a part of it."

TNA management may have taken action against Roode and Storm, but they've been very quiet about any sort of fines or suspensions. Whatever they've tried hasn't worked—possibly thanks to Roode's deep pockets—and Cornette is desperate to stop them. He's losing control fast, and if he can't put an end to Beer Money Inc.'s antics soon, what's to stop opposing teams from upping the ante and striking back in increasingly more violent ways?

"It's my job to put a stop to this, and mark my words, I will put a stop to it," Cornette said. "If I have to book them in a strap match every night of the week from now on, I'll do it. If I have to put these two yahoos 30 feet up in the air in an 'Elevation X' match and have them dropped on their heads, I'll do that, too. I don't care if they're the tag champions or not!

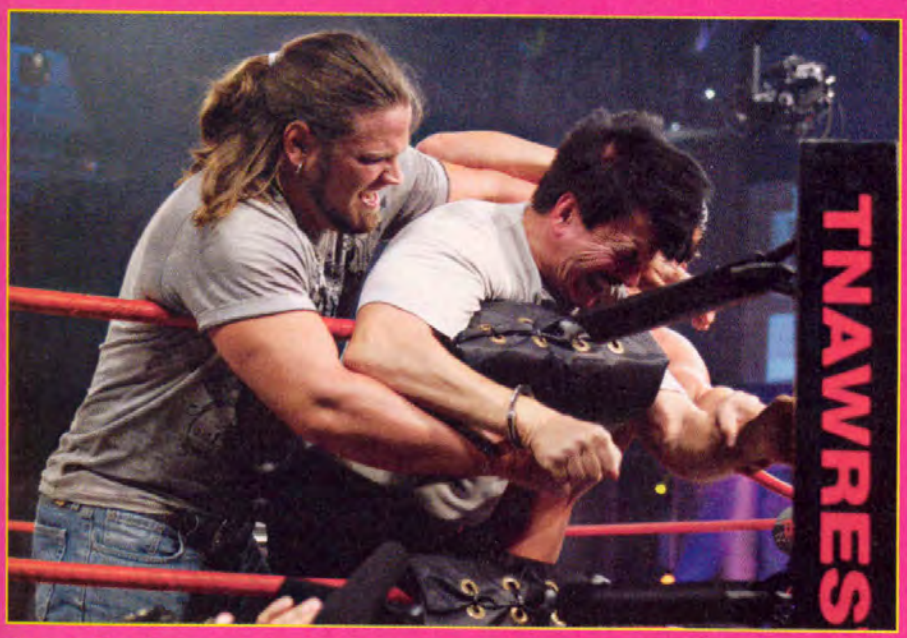
"It's turning into complete chaos, but I promise you, anarchy's not gonna break out on my watch."

Cornette is running out of patience—and options. Nobody even seems interested in stopping them.

"I've said for a long time that you can't stop talent," Roode crowed while tending to the wounds on his back. "For years, I've watched guys like Booker T and Kurt Angle and Jeff Hardy walk into TNA and have everything handed to them on a silver platter. I tried to make my point in the ring, and Cornette and TNA management didn't listen. Well they're listening now, aren't they?"

Storm cracked open another beer, took a swig, and laughed.

"Sorry about your damn luck, Cornette." □



Storm bullies Latin American Exchange manager Hector Guerrero and handcuffs him to the ropes (above). Here's what Guerrero's back looked like after Roode and Storm—the new TNA World tag team champions—were through with him (below).

TNA Managing Director Jim Cornette has tried various ways of keeping Beer Money Inc. in check. But win or lose, it seems Storm and Roode always find a way to terrorize opponents and fans alike. The question remains: What will Cornette do next?

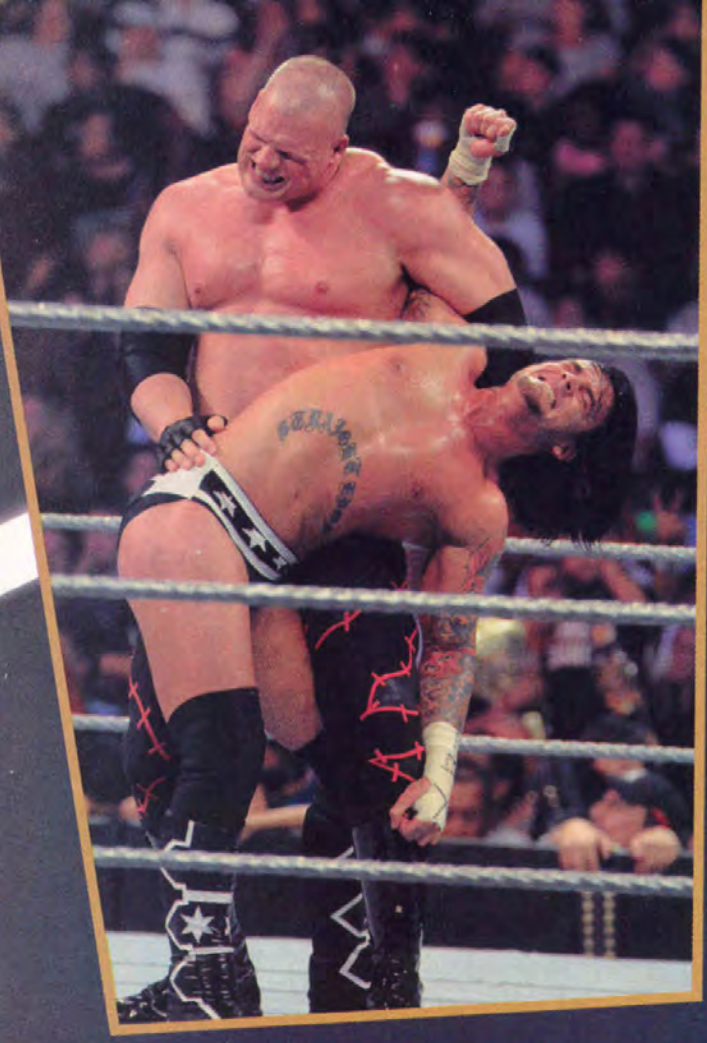
POWER STRUGGLE!

With TRIPLE-H on Smackdown ...who will Take Control of Raw?

TEXT BY **LOUIE DEE**
PHOTOS BY **GEORGE NAPOLITANO**

THE WWE DRAFT always packs surprises, but the 2008 version may have truly shaken WWE to its very core. With the final pick of the night, Smackdown scored a momentous blow by landing WWE champion Triple-H, leaving Raw without a world champion and perhaps its biggest asset.

While Raw did land several top-notch superstars in the same draft, "The Game's" selection meant much more than roster depth—it changed the faces of both brands. Smackdown gained a champion, but Raw lost so much more. That's because while Triple-H hasn't always held a world title, he *always* has been the heart and soul of Raw. He was there from the get-go—the 2002 brand extension—and was such a force on Monday nights that when he was drafted to Smackdown in the 2004 draft lottery, then-Raw GM Eric Bischoff agonized for 24 hours before trading away three superstars to reclaim him.



As World champ, C.M. Punk should be the most likely star to lead Raw into the future, but questions abound over the young man's leadership skills. Kane, meanwhile, is vying for the same spot as Punk.

But this time things are different for the red brand. Its primary mover isn't coming back to the flagship—at least not anytime soon.

In many ways, Raw has descended into chaos since Triple-H's departure—the freak accident that felled Vince McMahon, the sudden elevation of C.M. Punk as World champ and subsequent challenges from Batista, John Cena, Bradshaw Layfield, and Kane, the dramatic personality shift in Chris Jericho, the appointment of Mike Adamle as Raw general manager.

With WWE's most influential wrestler earning his pay on Tuesday nights, each and every one of these superstars (among others) is attempting to assume Triple-H's spot at the top of the Raw brand. But who among them can step up and remain there?

The apparent answer should be current World champion C.M. Punk. After all, he is the man who brought a World title back to Raw by defeating Edge just one week after the draft. However, nobody can say with certainty just how suited the "Straightedge Superstar" is to carrying the brand on his back.

Certainly, Punk has enjoyed much success throughout his career. But most of his leadership experience was gained in smaller, more regional promotions. Plus, Punk made his WWE debut barely two years ago. He hasn't been through the wars some of Raw's other top superstars have. The pressures of serving as the face of the brand while simultaneously defending his World title may be too much for the young superstar to bear.

Then there are the politics. Punk strives to hold himself above backstage politics, but as Raw's standard-bearer, he'll likely have to get down in the mud like every other high-profile superstar to protect his status. Triple-H was a master politician who seemed to delight in that game. Punk, who seems to have neither the stomach nor the

Batista has plenty of experience being The Man in WWE. "The Animal" is a multi-time WWE champion and cut his teeth under the tutelage of Triple-H and Ric Flair.

experience for such machinations, might be in over his head.

Batista, on The Other Hand, seems much better primed to succeed Triple-H. In fact, if it weren't for Kane's interference at The Great American Bash, "The Animal" may have already supplanted Punk as champion.

Batista returned to Raw the same night the "Cerebral Assassin" left, and he's made an immediate impact on the brand he once dominated as a member of Evolution. More than Punk, Batista knows what it's like to be The Man. He's literally a student of "The Game" (as well as Ric Flair), he has the credentials—three-time World heavyweight champion, 2005 Royal Rumble winner, only man to defeat Triple-H inside Hell in a Cell—and he is one of the most popular superstars in WWE.

And when it comes to politics, Batista has demonstrated he's willing and able to take care of himself backstage (remember that locker room fight with Booker T from a few years ago?).

Yet all Batista's qualifications may not hold up against John Bradshaw Layfield, who lives by the old proverb that says, "Money is power." As JBL has tried to prove ever since Vince and HHH disappeared from Raw, he has the desire and the financial wherewithal to seize a place at the top of the brand.

If Layfield were to ascend to the top of Raw, it would most likely be to the dismay of colleagues and fans. Regardless, JBL may indeed be the most logical candidate. He knows what he's doing in the ring. After all, the self-made millionaire is the longest reigning WWE champion in Smackdown history. And he constructed that history-making reign with equal parts savvy and physicality. JBL surrounded himself with his Cabinet, which gave him strength in numbers. And he used his stiff wrestling style to earn a reputation for ferocity in the ring.

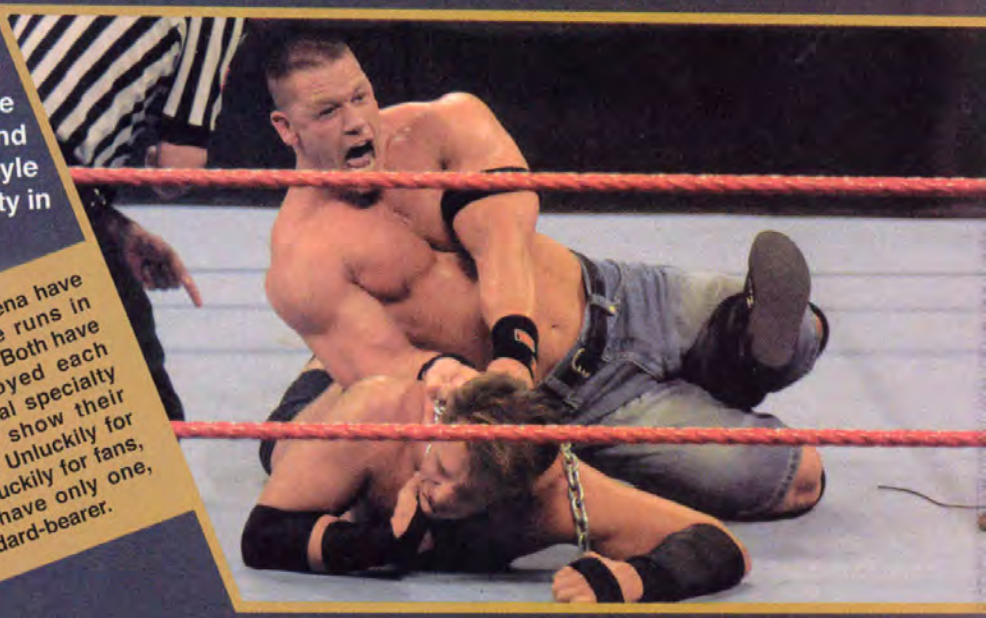
By aligning himself with former World tag team champions Cody Rhodes and Ted DiBiase Jr., Layfield could in fact be looking to recreate his glory years.

Most of all, JBL has the drive and confidence a genuine superstar needs to dominate a roster of talented, proven superstars. To JBL, the transfer of power on Raw is a mere formality, something he's earned by virtue of his past successes both in and out of the ring.

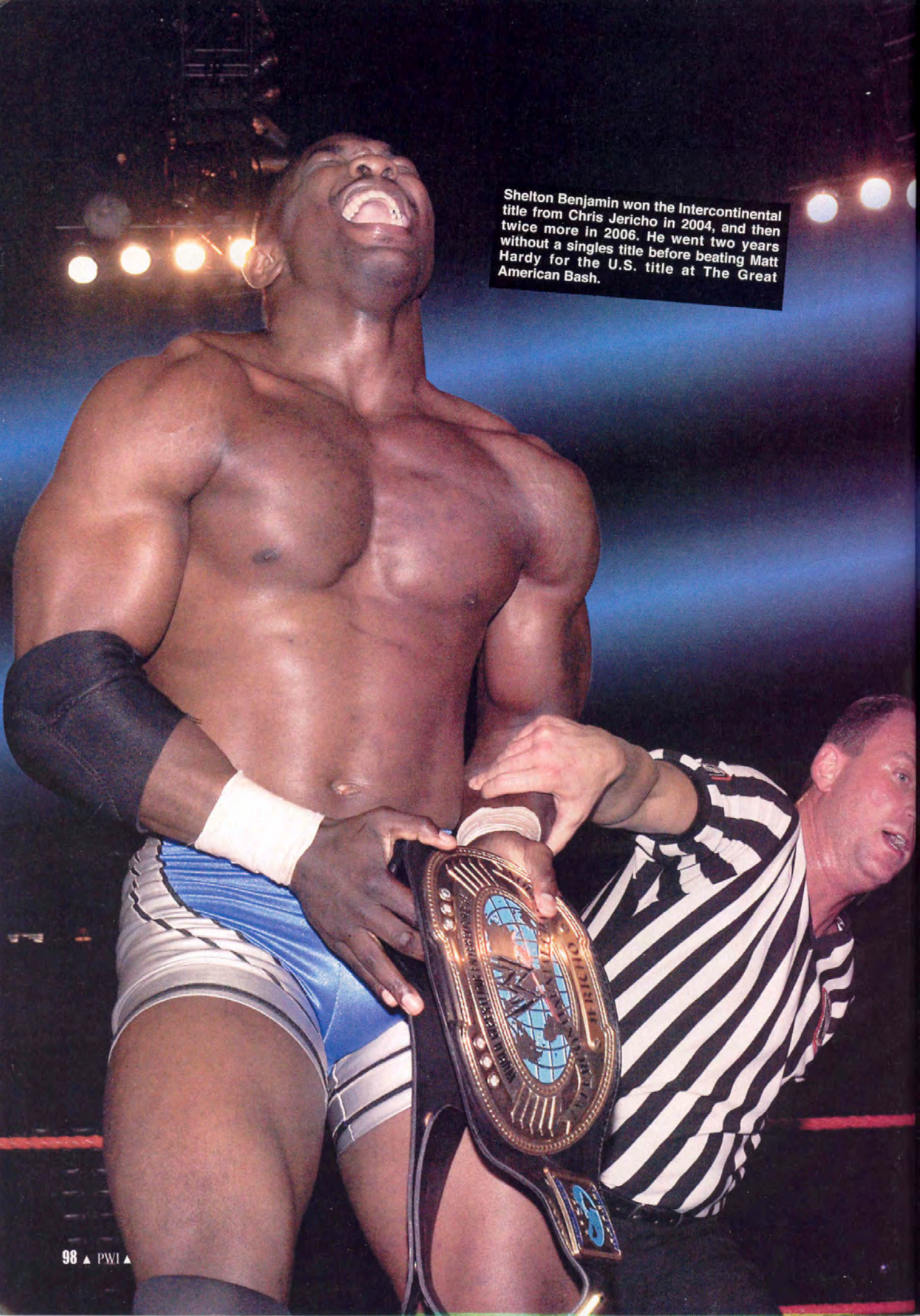
"People know where the power lies," JBL laughed. "When the CEO of a major corporation goes on hiatus, do they bring in the janitor or the mail clerk to replace him? Hell no. They bring in a man like me, someone who knows what he's doing. I've dominated the stock market, I've dominated Smackdown, and it's only natural that I'll dominate Raw, too."

While Punk, Batista, and Layfield may be the sexiest options to fill Triple-H's massive shoes on Raw, there are others parties that could make an impact. John Cena, for example, is a proven commodity whose track record demands that he be included in any conversation of Raw's top tier. 2008 draftees Rey Mysterio and Kane will also be gunning for the spotlight on Monday nights. Shawn Michaels and Chris Jericho have been to the top before and seem fit to return. Randy Orton will be back from injury soon enough and there's a new generation of superstars, such as Kofi Kingston and Paul Birchall, who will seize every opportunity that comes their way.

No matter who fills the void left by Helmsley's departure to Smackdown, one thing is certain as the Raw power struggle plays out—the fans are in for one entertaining ride. □



JBL and John Cena have had remarkable runs in WWE's top tier. Both have nearly destroyed each other in brutal specialty matches to show their dominance. Unluckily for them, but luckily for fans, Raw can have only one, true standard-bearer.



Shelton Benjamin won the Intercontinental title from Chris Jericho in 2004, and then twice more in 2006. He went two years without a singles title before beating Matt Hardy for the U.S. title at The Great American Bash.

SHELTON BENJAMIN'S BREAKTHROUGH MATCH

WELL, NOT SO FAST!

TEXT BY **DAVE LENKER**

THE FUNNY THING about a breakthrough or a career-defining match, is that it seems like everyone has a different definition, and what qualifies as a breakthrough match for one wrestler can be just another regular old match for the guy who dresses next to him in the locker room five nights a week.

What makes a breakthrough match? Depends on the circumstances, the wrestler's age, his current status in his promotion, or the sport as a whole. Also, where he's been, where he's headed, who his opponent is, his opponent's status, and so forth. It depends on what "breakthrough" means to you in the context of pro wrestling. It can be a world championship match on one of the biggest pay-per-views of the year ... or a TV match that wasn't even booked or hyped ahead of time. It just depends.

Even then, what looks and feels like a breakthrough match when it happens, might turn out to be, well, not so much. You really have to wait for what comes next.

We know that The 1-2-3 Kid's much-ballyhooed victory over Razor Ramon 15 years ago live on Raw was a breakthrough match. The future X-Pac was just an exciting youngster who had some pretty terrific and daring aerial moves, but a pretty lousy win-loss record in the WWF up to that night. The stunning upset felt like a breakthrough win, and as history proved, was. He eventually became a huge part of the NWO boom in WCW half a decade later and a key player during the heart of WWE's "Attitude Era."

Even though he needed an assist from his chair-wielding brother, Matt, Jeff Hardy was counting on his Intercontinental title victory over Triple-H on the April 10, 2001, edition of Smackdown to be a breakthrough win. It felt like a breakthrough match at the time, but he realized it wasn't going to be just six nights later when Triple-H took that belt back fairly easily. That win didn't catapult him into the main-event picture then, and he still hasn't reached that elite level yet, seven-plus years later.

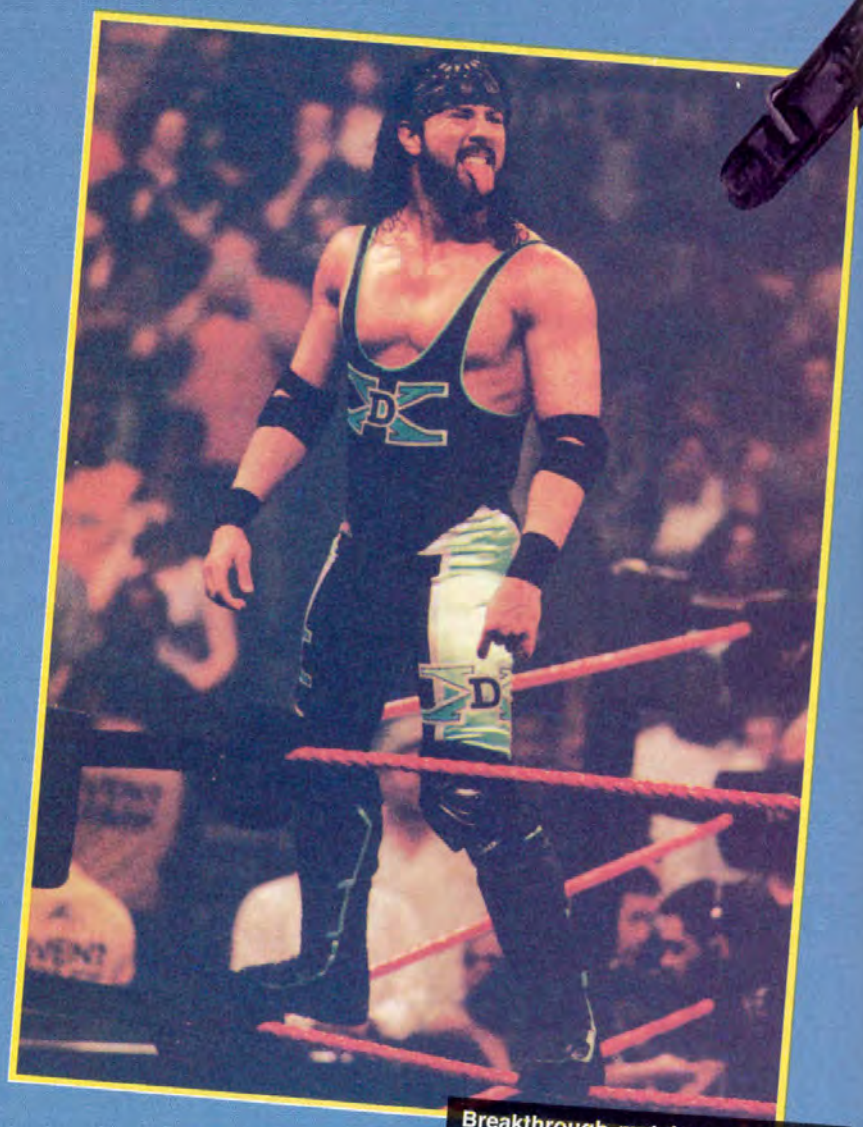
Did you even remember that match?

"I remember that real well," Jeff Hardy told *PWI*. "Wow, I almost can't believe it was really seven years ago. One of the things I remember best about it is how many calls I got within a few days of that happening. I heard from people I had barely talked to in years, guys I started out with, a couple of people I went to school with. You know, maybe it was too much. They all thought it was so cool that I beat Triple-H. But ..."

The younger Hardy's voice trailed off. He didn't really care to revisit the flip side of a great memory. The implication, however, was clear. Breaking through the door is one thing, but you have to keep moving after you get through the doorway and not look back. Otherwise the door might close on you again when you're not paying attention.

On the other hand, his brother, Matt, is hoping that particular piece of wrestling history repeats itself. You see, he's *already* a little sick of hearing about Shelton Benjamin's alleged breakthrough win over him for the U.S. title at The Great American Bash in July. Hardy's not ready to buy the whole "breakthrough" idea just yet.

We're as skeptical as Matt is. How many breakthrough wins can a man have, especially one with the tools Benjamin has had since he signed his developmental deal with WWE a decade ago and formed a tag team called The



Breakthrough matches can be the things dreams are made of. In the case of the 1-2-3 Kid, his match against Razor Ramon in the early-1990s set him on a path to stardom. The 1-2-3 Kid, seen here as X-Pac, would ride that breakthrough match and become one of the most recognizable faces in pro wrestling during his tenure.

GET SCOOPS AND EXPERT ANALYSIS IN YOUR MAILBOX EVERY WEEK!

PRO WRESTLING TORCH WEEKLY

GET THE REAL INSIDER STORY ON WWE, TNA, ROH IN YOUR MAILBOX EVERY WEEK & KEEP UP ON OLD FAVORITES, TOO!

FOR 20 YEARS, WE'VE DELIVERED EXCLUSIVE INSIDER NEWS TO THOUSANDS OF FANS - IT'S YOUR TIME TO JOIN THEM

Just $10 for 8 issues!

Save more than 50% off regular rate!

PRO WRESTLING TORCH

A Five-Star Finish for Ric Flair

HEADLINE ANALYSIS

Winners & Losers

PRO WRESTLING TORCH

CNN distorts Cena comments on steroids

Incriminating out of context quote included, denial excluded

COVER STORY

McMahons on Defensive

PRO WRESTLING TORCH

Investigators release details on Benoit case

Wife considering leaving him, steroids usage, drug abuse

HEADLINE ANALYSIS

Strong WWE Financials

PRO WRESTLING TORCH

Brock Lesnar loses UFC debut - taps out to Mir

Some questions answered, others still linger

HEADLINE ANALYSIS

Building WrestleMania

MANY WRESTLING WEBSITES RELY ON US FOR THEIR "SCOOPS" BUT WHY SETTLE FOR 2ND HAND SUMMARIES?

EDITOR WADE KELLER HAS BEEN INTERVIEWED BY MAJOR TV STATIONS, NEWSPAPERS & RADIO WORLDWIDE AS EXPERT ANALYST

Don't be left out. Act now!

It's like a 16 page sports section on wrestling!

IN-DEPTH PPV REPORTS & ANALYSIS • TORCH TALK INTERVIEWS
HARD-HITTING EDITORIALS • HISTORY • LOCKER ROOM CONTROVERSIES

MAJOR FREE BONUS WITH YOUR SUBSCRIPTION!

GET SUBSCRIBER-ONLY ACCESS TO AROUND 50 iPOD COMPATIBLE AUDIO SHOWS A MONTH AT OUR PASSWORD-PROTECTED VIP MEMBERS' SITE AND INSTANT ACCESS TO HUNDREDS OF BACK ISSUES OF PRO WRESTLING TORCH NEWSLETTER FROM THE EARLY-'90S THROUGH 2000S. SIGN UP AT HTTP://WWW.PWTORCH.COM/PWIOFFER

MAIL THIS FORM WITH PAYMENT to PWTorch Newsletter - PO Box 211654 - St. Paul, MN 55121

Circle One: Check • Money Order • Visa • Master Card

CREDIT CARD NUMBER _____ EXP. DATE _____

SIGNATURE (for credit card orders only) _____

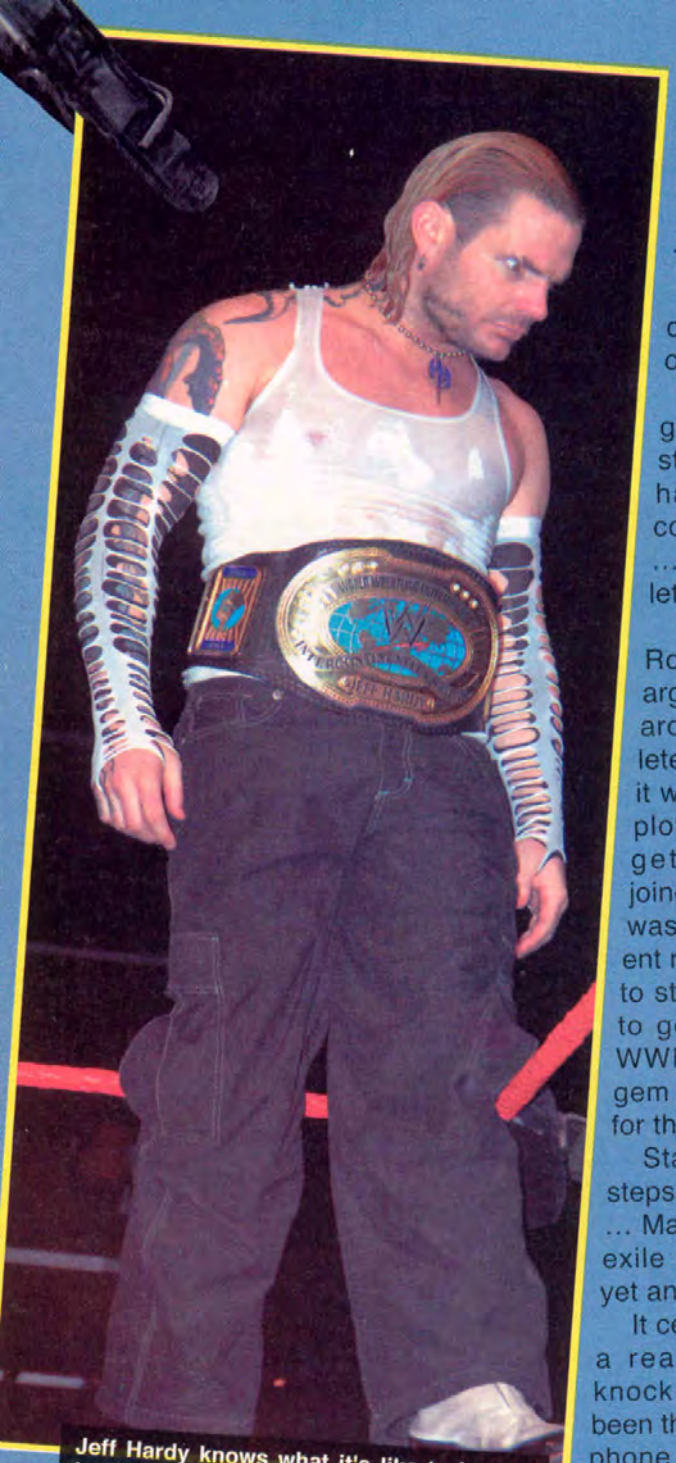
PLEASE PRINT FIRST AND LAST NAME _____

STREET ADDRESS _____

CITY • STATE • ZIP _____

EMAIL (Optional - PWTorch News Alerts for Subscribers Only.) _____

ORDER WITH PAY PAL RIGHT NOW! HTTP://WWW.PWTORCH.COM/PWIOFFER



Jeff Hardy knows what it's like to have a breakthrough match not last long enough to remember the taste. But after his victory over Triple-H, he just knew a meteoric rise to glory was in store for his career.

Minnesota Stretching Crew with a fellow young stud whom you may have heard of, Brock Lesnar? Isn't this the man who beat Triple-H three times, including two Monday nights in a row on TV, in the span of only a few months just four years ago? That should have been a series of breakthrough wins, but it wasn't. Doesn't he also have three Intercontinental titles and a couple of world tag team championships with Charlie Haas—The World's Greatest Tag Team—on his resume?

How many chances can a man get to break on through?

Maybe we have to give him a chance to start fresh given that he had his "mama" in his corner for a few months ... and people just won't let him forget it.

For years, we heard Jim Ross refer to him as arguably the best all-around, or pure, athlete in WWE. Perhaps it was a not-too-subtle ploy on J.R.'s part to get Benjamin, who joined WWE while Ross was heading up the talent relations department, to step up his game and to get certain others in WWE to realize what a gem they had just waiting for the right push.

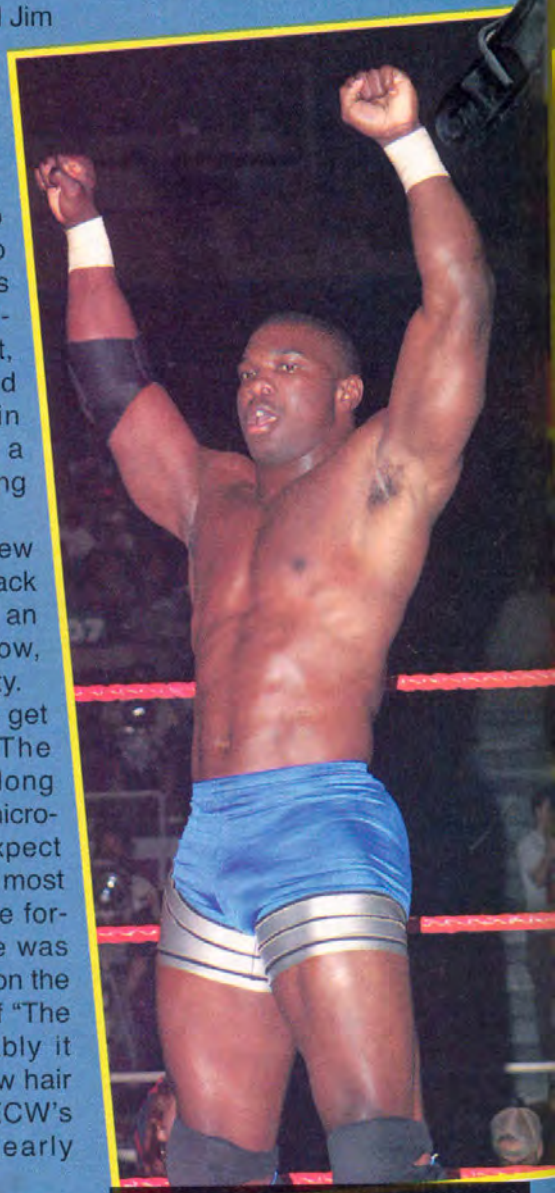
Starts ... stops ... a few steps forward ... a few back ... Mama ... a dye job ... an exile to ECW ... and, now, yet another big opportunity.

It certainly is difficult to get a read on Benjamin. The knock against him has long been that you can't put a microphone in his hand and expect much. But even during his most recent stint in ECW (you're forgiven if you didn't notice he was on the ECW roster), he took on the rather nebulous nickname of "The Gold Standard." Presumably it wasn't a reference to his new hair color or his goal of being ECW's top mid-carder. WWE clearly hadn't given up on him.

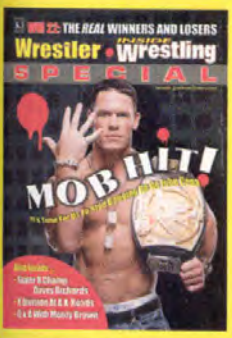
Hence the draft to the brand where he got his initial start in the WWE, Smackdown, and a U.S. championship win over Matt Hardy to boot. The last few years have been so lousy that you can't help but look at this as a really good thing for Benjamin.

You can. All of us can. But he had better not do the same thing. The time for celebration was over at least a few hours before the sun came up on Monday, July 21, 2008.

It is a good thing, but he needs it to get better. He didn't exactly do a lot to earn the title shot in the first place. If that little detail hasn't been forgotten yet, it will be if he makes this U.S. title reign fairly long and fairly memorable. Let's face it,



Shelton Benjamin has been riding the ebbs and flows of his career just trying to make a name for himself. He hopes that with his newest opportunity as the U.S. champion, he will be able to hang on for a chance to compete for the top prize.



INSIDE WRESTLING/ THE WRESTLER

Back Issues Available ... Limited Inventory!

Two venerable publishing giants together as one 108-page combination package. Get these back issues while limited supplies last!

Volume IV, 2006: "Stop Stalling! We Demand Batista vs. Lesnar." Plus: Angle & Michaels, America's Most Wanted, The McMahons, Kobashi vs. Samoa Joe, X Division, JBL, Carlito.

Volume VI, 2006: "Raw vs. Smackdown: The Ultimate WrestleMania!" Plus: Ric Flair, Orton vs. Undertaker, TNA vs. WWE, Benoit vs. Booker, Michaels vs. McMahon, Samoa Joe, Kurt Angle.

Volume VIII, 2006: "Mob Hit! It's Time For Us To Stop Ganging Up On John Cena!" Plus: Davey Richards, WrestleMania 22, X Division, Monty Brown, Samoa Joe.

Volume X, 2006: "Edged Out! When Will Lita Wake Up And Dump This Jerk?" Plus: The Great Khali, Umaga & Armando, Steiner & Jarrett, ECW, Arik Cannon, Petey Williams, Jim Cornette.

Volume XII, 2007: "Brawl In The Family! Inside The Crazy Lives Of The Fighting McMahons." Plus: Vito, Mistico, C.M. Punk, Styles & Daniels, WWE Divas, ECW tag teams, Sabu.

Volume XIV, 2007: "TNA To The Extreme! Will Paul Heyman Lead An ECW Faction To Florida?" Plus: Kelly Kelly, Petey Williams, Bryan Danielson, Mr. Kennedy, Cena vs. K-Fed, James Mitchell, Finlay.

Please send me the **INSIDE WRESTLING/THE WRESTLER SPECIALS** I have checked below. I have enclosed a check or money order for $7.95 (plus $2 each for shipping and handling), payable to Sports & Entertainment Publications LLC, for each issue I am ordering.

☐ Vol. IV, 2006
☐ Vol. VI, 2006
☐ Vol. VIII, 2006
☐ Vol. X, 2006
☐ Vol. XII, 2007
☐ Vol. XIV, 2007

SEND TO:
Sports and Entertainment Publications LLC
Box 910
Ft. Washington, PA 19034

Please indicate method of payment:
☐ Check or money order ☐ VISA ☐ MasterCard
(enclosed and payable to Sports & Entertainment Publications LLC)

Card #_____

Expiration Date: ___/___ MO/YR

___ ___ ___ 3-DIGIT SECURITY CODE

Signature: _____

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____ APT. _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____ EMAIL _____

For Canadian and Mexican orders, the postage and handling charge is $3 per issue (airmail). For all other countries, the postage and handling charge is $7.50 per issue (airmail). Int'l money order in U.S. funds only. Please allow 6-8 weeks for delivery.

7804

MAMA SAID THERE'D BE DAYS LIKE THESE ...

THE HIGHS AND LOWS OF BENJAMIN'S CAREER

Quietly getting sent to the mid-card of ECW months ago was a low for Benjamin, but getting drafted to Smackdown in June and taking advantage of a gift U.S. title shot was certainly a high. There have been many others.

10 highs:

February 13, 2001: Benjamin and Minnesota Stretching Crew teammate Brock Lesnar win the first of their three OVW Southern tag titles together in 2001 by beating The Disciples of Synn (B.J. Payne and Damian). Benjamin would later win the title with Redd Dogg (Rodney Mack).

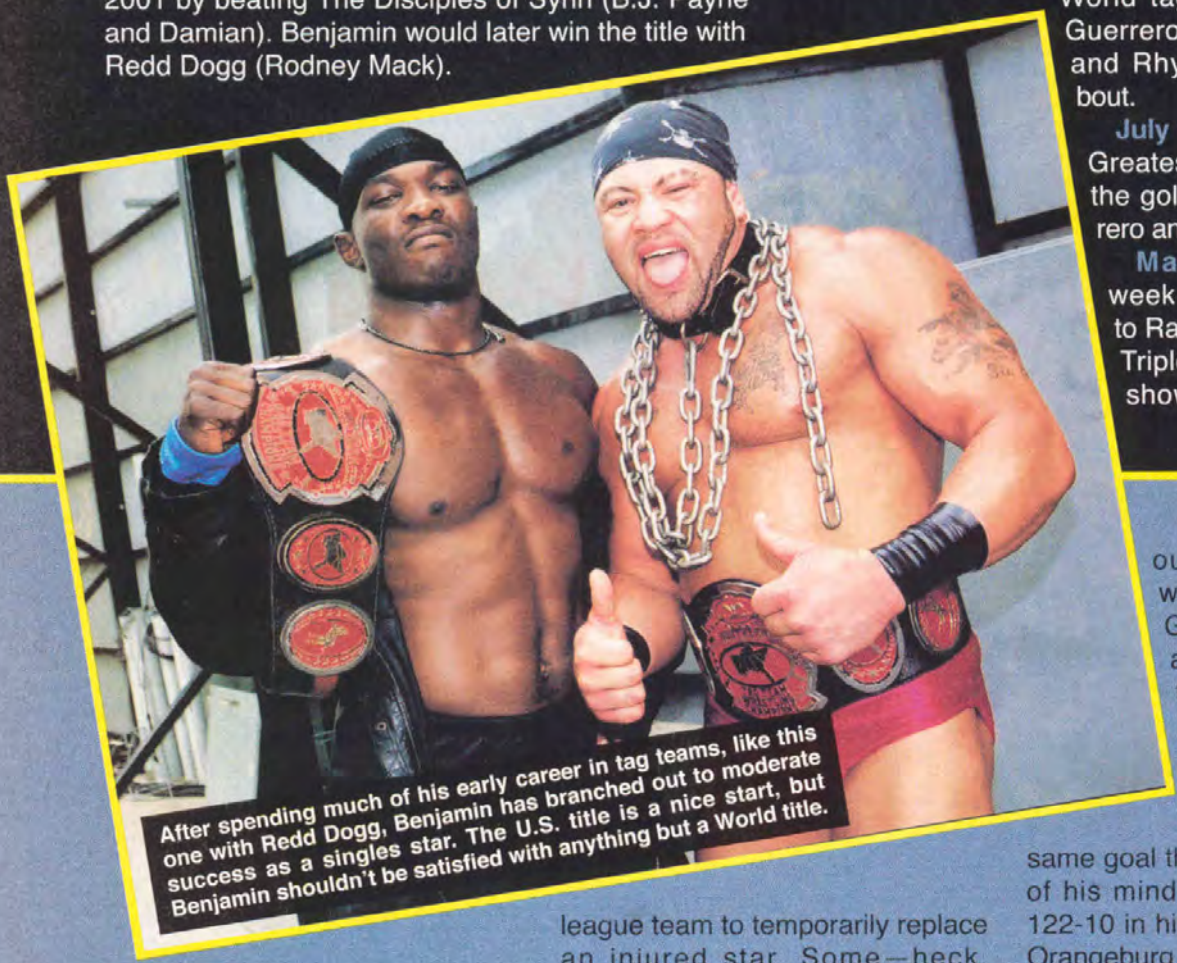
December 26, 2002: Benjamin and new teammate Charlie Haas debut on Smackdown as part of Kurt Angle's Team Angle. All three were, of course, collegiate wrestling standouts.

February 4, 2003: Barely a month after that WWE TV debut, Benjamin and Haas defeat Los Guerreros for the World tag team title on Smackdown.

March 30, 2003: Team Angle makes its WrestleMania (XIX) debut, successfully defending the World tag title against Los Guerreros and Chris Benoit and Rhyno in a three-way bout.

July 1, 2003: The World's Greatest Tag team regains the gold from Eddie Guerrero and Tajiri.

March 29, 2004: A week after being drafted to Raw, Benjamin defeats Triple-H by pinfall in the show's main event. He



After spending much of his early career in tag teams, like this one with Redd Dogg, Benjamin has branched out to moderate success as a singles star. The U.S. title is a nice start, but Benjamin shouldn't be satisfied with anything but a World title.

where the U.S. title is concerned, we're far removed from the glory days of Magnum T.A. vs. Nikita Koloff. But if Benjamin can put together some good matches with a very talented roster of Smackdown mid-carders, he should get noticed. If he connects with fans the way he did a few years ago, and presumably still can, the *right* people will notice.

He can look at it as if he's a professional baseball player who has been called up to the major league team to temporarily replace an injured star. Some—heck, maybe even most—might expect him to be pushed back down and out of the spotlight soon enough and forgotten thereafter. But if that minor leaguer plays well enough, the big team might have to find a regular spot for that fill-in player.

If he does well enough in the next few months, Benjamin might force WWE to give him prominent time and key matches on Smackdown and on pay-per-views next week, next month, and five years from now.

Not to get ahead of ourselves here, but if what happened at The Great American Bash is a breakthrough match, the U.S. championship should hardly be his ultimate goal. He should have in the back of his mind the same goal that he had in the back of his mind when he was going 122-10 in high school wrestling in Orangeburg, South Carolina, when he won two state championships in the heavyweight class, when he was a junior college national champion, when he compiled a 36-6 record with 12 pinfalls at the University of Minnesota, when he first set foot inside OVW's old Davis Arena, when he pinned Triple-H, and so on.

The World title could be his in time. Yes, the title that just so happens to be wrapped around the waist of "The Game," a man he proved he could beat in 2004. Just

would beat him again (by countout) a week later. He is never more popular with fans.

October 19, 2004: Benjamin wins the online fan vote (37 percent) to earn an I-C title shot at Taboo Tuesday and pins Chris Jericho cleanly for the belt.

May 2, 2005: Benjamin loses to Shawn Michaels on Raw but in a Match of the Year-quality bout.

May 15, 2006: Benjamin wins another Intercontinental title by pinning Rob Van Dam in a "Texas Tornado" match.

December 11, 2006: The WGTT is back! Benjamin and Haas beat The Highlanders on Raw, though they would never win another tag title together.

And 10 lows:

October 2, 2002: Soon after it is announced in OVW that Benjamin would be leaving for WWE, Redd Dogg turns against Benjamin even though they are co-holders of the OVW Southern tag title. Dogg beats him for control of the title.

June 12, 2003: Team Angle is fired by Kurt Angle shortly after they lose the World tag title.

March 14, 2004: Despite being clearly the best tag team of the four, Benjamin and Haas lose to Rikishi and Scotty Too Hotty, the Bashams, and The APA in a four-way bout at WrestleMania XX.

June 14, 2004: Benjamin defeats Garrison Cade in a *Heat* match but breaks his hand punching Cade's knee brace. He misses a few months of action as a result.

June 20, 2005: New Raw draftee Carlito beats Benjamin for the Intercontinental title.

September 12, 2005: Benjamin defeats Chavo Guerrero Jr.'s alter-ego, Kerwin White, by DQ, but ends up with White's golf club wrapped around his neck. Not a memorable feud.

December 19, 2005: In the midst of a losing streak, Benjamin falls to Snitsky during a Raw taped in front of thousands of U.S. troops in Afghanistan. Snitsky?

January 2, 2006: *Ugh!* Benjamin's "mama" shows up to berate him after a loss to Chris Masters.

February 6, 2006: *Double-ugh!* Benjamin loses to The Big Show, and Mama, apparently a fan of classic sitcom *Sanford And Son*, seems to suffer a heart attack at ringside after Show yells at her.

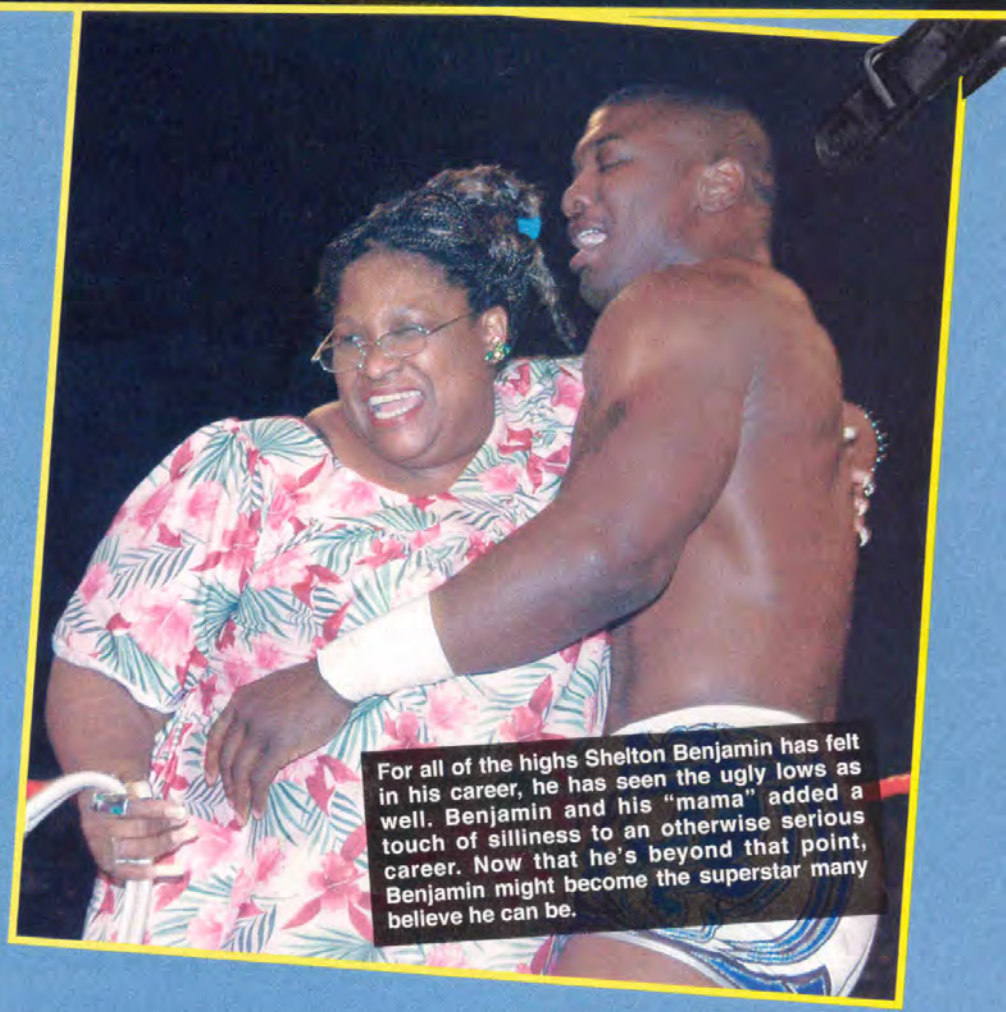
March 26, 2007: Benjamin loses to Super Crazy in a match taped for *Heat*. It's bad enough being stuck on *Heat*, but losing on *Heat* ... and to Super Crazy? It became a bad trend.

—Dave Lenker

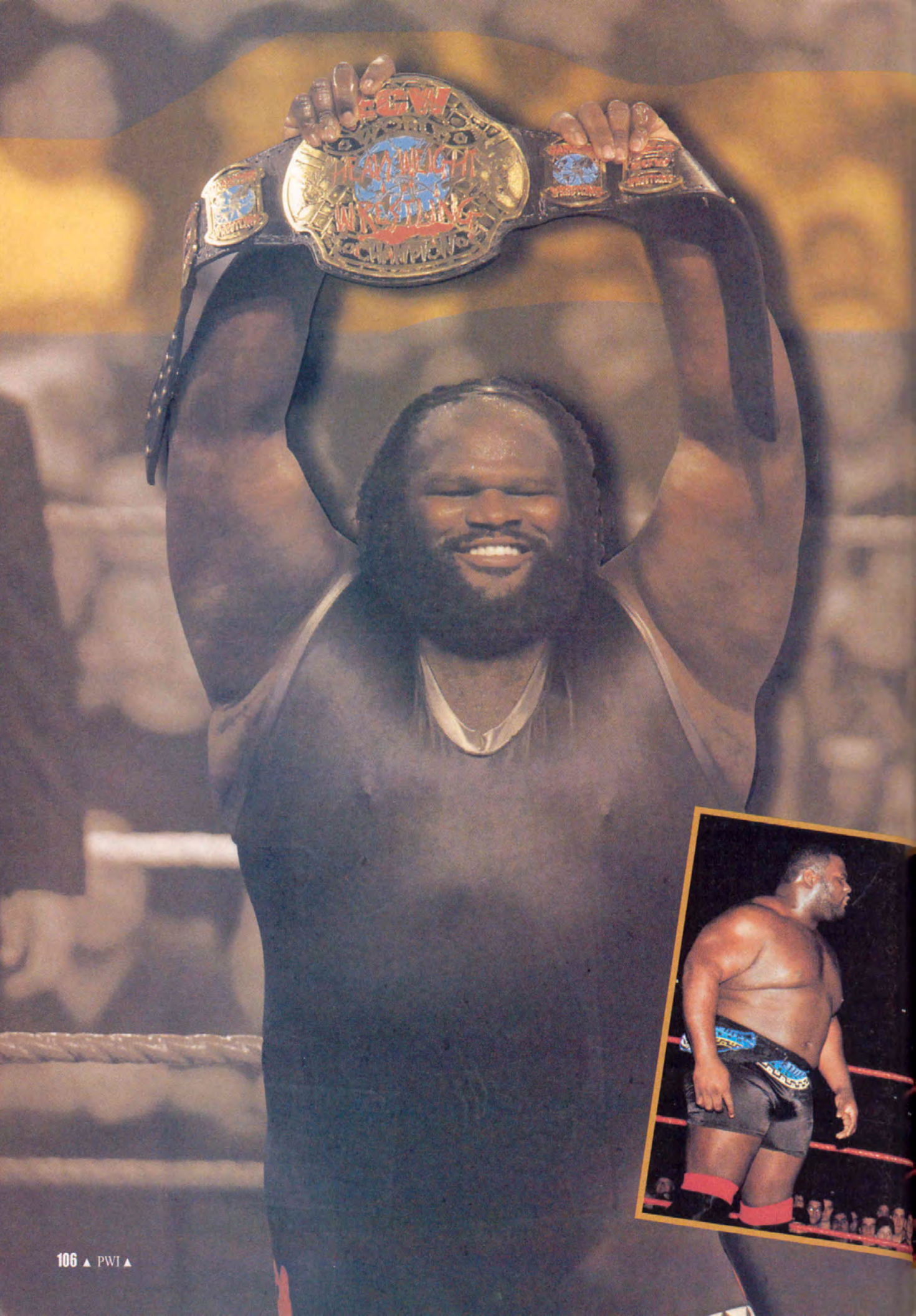
for the record, he also did very well in singles and tag team matches against Edge, Triple-H's new arch-rival, a few years ago as well. It's an attainable goal for a man with enough big match experience (he has logged almost six full years in WWE already), a world and a half of athletic skill (have we seen every suplex variation in his repertoire yet?), and still a bunch of untapped potential. This might be his last great opportunity.

No matter what definition any one of us comes up with for breakthrough victory, we'll know soon enough whether this constitutes one for Benjamin ... or if this has all the significance of Finlay's victory over William Regal in the U.S. title match at The Great American Bash two years ago.

Considering all he's been through in the past two years, the difficult part might seem to now be over for Benjamin. It's only going to get more difficult from here, but it might get a lot more rewarding, too. □



For all of the highs Shelton Benjamin has felt in his career, he has seen the ugly lows as well. Benjamin and his "mama" added a touch of silliness to an otherwise serious career. Now that he's beyond that point, Benjamin might become the superstar many believe he can be.


ECW
HEAVYWEIGHT
WRESTLING
CHAMPION

MARK HENRY:

"The ECW Title Is More Than Just A Belt To Me"

Despite all the tools Mark Henry seemed to possess, he was addled with a score of bad gimmicks. Membership in The Nation with D-Lo Brown was just the first setback.

TEXT BY **HARRY BURKETT**
PHOTOS BY **GEORGE NAPOLITANO**

DURING HIS 12-PLUS years in the wrestling business, Mark Henry has been the butt of countless jokes. No, make that the *big* butt of countless jokes.

See, there goes another one.

But people have had reason to make fun of Henry. WWE signed the largest weightlifter ever to compete in the Olympics to an unprecedented 10-year contract in 1996 and it's only now—in 2008—that Henry is just beginning to approach his vast potential. Let's face it: That would be like Vince McMahon Sr. signing young weightlifter Bruno Sammartino in 1963 and he doesn't crack the mid-card until 1975!

Henry has really been put through it. Remember, this is the guy (at least according to the storylines) who admitted to having a sexual experience with his sister, had a rendezvous with a transvestite,

As "Sexual Chocolate," WWE chose to promote Henry's poor poetry rather than his athletic ability. Henry proved his staying power by enduring this insulting character to eventually become the ECW champion.

and impregnated a 76-year-old woman, who later gave birth to a hand! He nearly surpassed Lanny Poffo as the worst poet laureate in WWE history. He's been called "Mizark," "Sexual Chocolate," and even a "Silverback Gorilla." None of those monikers gave Henry the dignity or respect he deserves.

Perhaps the most humiliating episode occurred when Smackdown creative team member Michael Hayes belittled Henry with a racist comment during WrestleMania weekend. WWE suspended Hayes for 60 days.

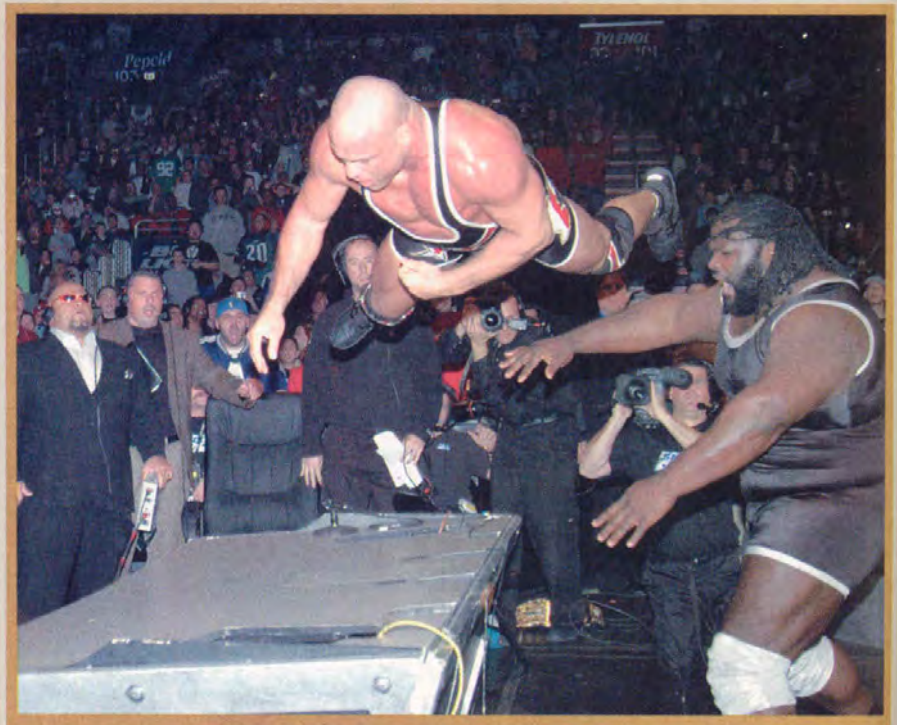
This was not the career Henry had in mind when he spent virtually all of his teenage years banging barbells inside a gym, building up the body that would give him legitimate claim to the unofficial title "World's Strongest Man." Indeed, his WWE accomplishments have been a far cry from his participation in the 1992 Olympic Games in Barcelona, his capture of gold, silver, and bronze medals at the 1995 Pan-American Games, and his triumphs at the North America, Central America, and Caribbean Islands weightlifting championships in 1996. Even as late as 2002, Henry won first place at the Arnold Schwarzenegger Strongman Classic. In fact, he still drives around in the Hummer that he won at that event.

In 2008, Mark Henry won the ECW championship.

Is that a big deal? As far as Henry and his new manager Tony Atlas are concerned, it certainly is. Other than an insignificant run as WWF European champion back in 1999 (Jeff Jarrett actually gave him the belt), this is the first major strap that has been around his gargantuan waist.

"Finally, Mark's been given the ball, and he ain't gonna fumble it," Atlas said. "You know, I can't believe that anybody fell for our little trick on ECW a while back, that people didn't realize that me and Mark had a real connection. With me in his corner, Mark's gonna be unstoppable. I've watched Mark for years, just hoping he'd break through."

Henry was actually on the verge of breaking through a number of times, but he has always suffered a broken *something* to set back his career another year. There was the shoulder injury he suffered during a match against Chris Benoit in 2002. When Henry was sent back to Ohio Valley Wrestling for more seasoning (a somewhat embarrassing development for someone with eight years in the sport), he tore his quadriceps muscle at the OVW training facility. Then, when WWE finally gave Henry a monster



Tough luck did nothing to douse Henry's competitive fire, as Kurt Angle can attest. Here Henry tosses his fellow Olympian like a trashman tosses a sack of garbage.

After a 10-year struggle, Mark Henry will undoubtedly be ultra-protective of his ECW title. The mentorship of Tony Atlas will make Henry even that much harder to displace as ECW champ.

push on Smackdown in 2006, he tore his patella tendon in two during a six-man tag team match on *Saturday Night's Main Event*.

Henry attacked The Undertaker upon his return, leading to a feud in which the "Dead Man" decimated him. The "World's Strongest Man" seemed to be back to square one.

Then came WWE's supplemental draft. That's right, Henry didn't even receive the courtesy of having his reassignment to ECW announced on the air. Fans had to learn about it on WWE.com.

Yet Henry made a mighty big impact. He defeated WWE's two other resident monsters—The Big Show and then-defending champ Kane—for the ECW heavyweight title at Night of Champions. No one saw it coming ... which made it all the more effective. After C.M. Punk was drafted to Raw, everyone wondered what a post-Punk ECW would look like. Apparently, the plan was to have Henry as the centerpiece.

While critics will continue to ridicule Henry, likening his accomplishment to becoming the champion of *Sunday Night Heat*, this could be the golden opportunity that the newly anointed "World's Strongest Champion" has anticipated for the past dozen years. He is the lead star of a nationally televised prime-time wrestling show. What wrestler wouldn't envy that position?

For too many years, Mark Henry had been the man chasing the dream. As ECW champ, Henry must adjust to dealing with the target that's now on his massive back.

"This time is different because I'm guiding his career," Atlas commented. "I know what it's like to be a bodybuilder-turned-wrestler. I'm gonna work with Mark every day, making sure he's using training techniques that will help him avoid injury.

"More importantly, I know what it's like to be an African-American in this business. Guys like Bobo Brazil and Art Thomas passed the torch to me and Rocky Johnson, and Mark's continuing that tradition. Mark's time is now."

Vince McMahon must think so too. He wouldn't have gone to the expense of having an extra-large ECW title belt custom-fitted specifically for Henry. Even the design was a radical departure from the original belt.

"I don't know about that—I wouldn't be surprised by any inside jokes around here," Henry said. "But I'll tell you what, I am no joke. This ECW title reign is no joke. The ECW title is more than just a belt to me. All the hard work—the injuries, the pain, the travel—has led to this belt I have in my hands. Guys like Tommy Dreamer, and even some old ECW fans out there, don't think I should be ECW champion. Well, I can't think of anybody who's worked harder for so long to get it. Now that I've got it, I'm not lettin' it go."

Dreamer, Matt Hardy, Evan Bourne, Ricky Ortiz, and everyone else on the ECW roster had better take heed. Henry views that silver belt as his redemption ... and it will take a heckuva wrestler to pry it out of his massive hands. □

the business page

By Harry Burkett

Flair is a free agent ... While it was assumed Ric Flair would remain a goodwill ambassador for WWE, making public appearances and enjoying his legendary status, it now appears that the sometimes tumultuous seven-year relationship between Flair and WWE has come to an end. The two sides were not able to come to terms when Flair's WWE contract expired in August.

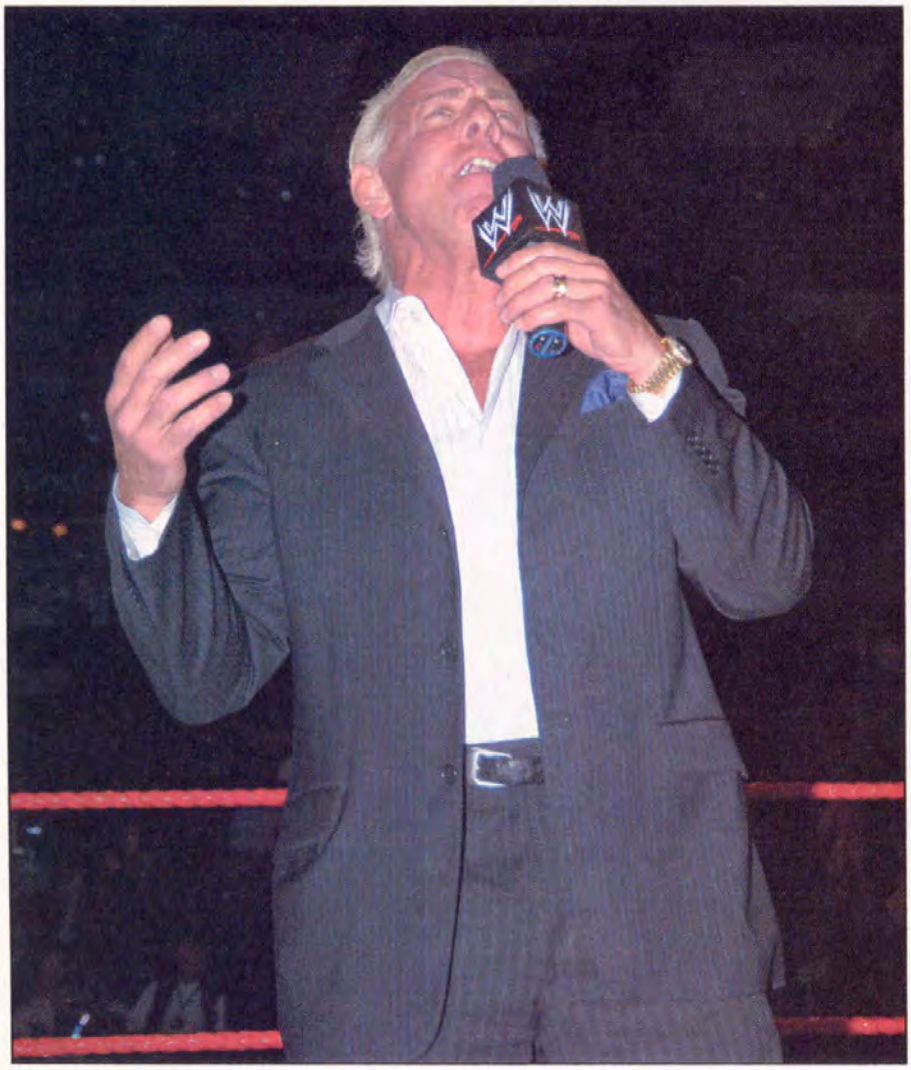
So what caused the split? The most likely scenario is WWE was unwilling to pay Flair anything approaching what he had earned as an active wrestler. As a result, the 16-time world champion was willing to take his chances on making a living outside of WWE.

Flair immediately made it known that he was a client of the Gillespie Agency, a publicity firm that also books appearances for Mick Foley and Roddy Piper. He plans to pursue television and movie roles in addition to lucrative corporate speaking engagements and commercial work.

For the first time in his career, Flair will make himself available for special appearances on the independent circuit. But, before promoters try to book the "Nature Boy" for Paw Paw Championship Wrestling or Flea Market All-Star Wrestling events, they should consider this: Flair's asking fee is $15,000 per appearance. Mr. Wrestling III doesn't seem so bad after all, does he?

Meanwhile, his latest venture, Ric Flair Finance, has already gone under. If "Naitch" couldn't even keep his own business afloat for at least a year, why should we have trusted his "figure-four process" of securing a loan?

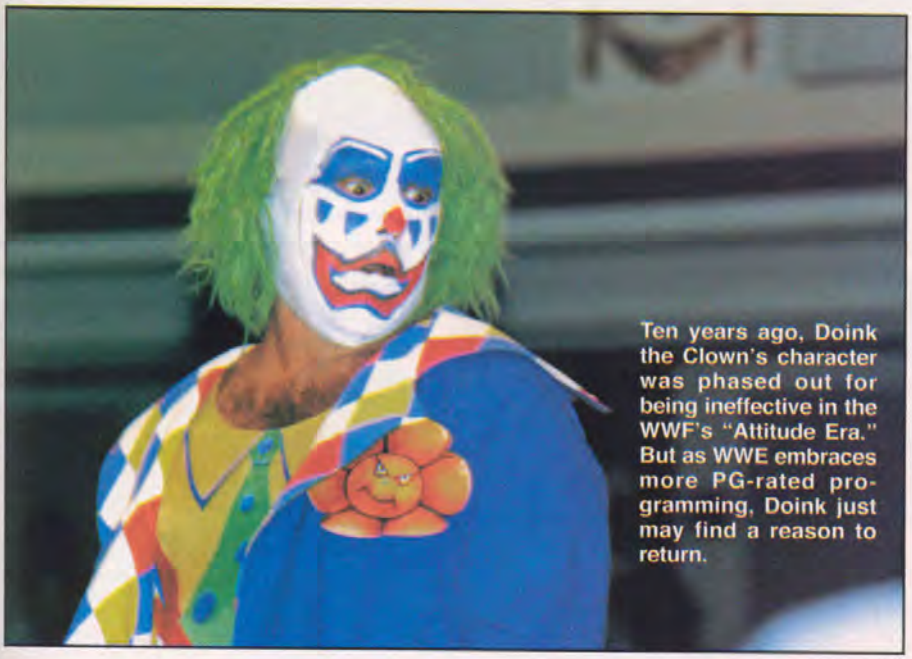
Finally, amid all this upheaval in his professional life, Flair has split with his third wife, 36-year-old Tiffany VanDemark, whom he married in 2006. The two met in 1999.



Start saving your pennies, promoters. After his tenure with WWE finally ended in August, Ric Flair is a free agent—a very expensive free agent. Booking the "Nature Boy" for your show will cost you $15,000 at least.

ROH in the Great White North ... Ring of Honor has already run shows from coast to coast in the United States and run co-promotional events in Japan. Now it has conquered another frontier—Canada. More than 1,800 fans were in attendance for ROH's debut at the Ted Reeve Arena in Toronto.

Austin Aries and Jay Briscoe beat Tyler Black and Jimmy Jacobs in the no-disqualification main event when Mark Briscoe intercepted the Age of the Fall's minion, Necro Butcher. To his credit, Necro ignored Jacobs' order to spike Aries in the eye, but that allowed Mark and Aries to execute the doomsday device on Black. Aries and Briscoe's big win topped off a show that saw ROH champion Nigel McGuinness defeat Canadian sensation Kevin Steen, Naomichi Marufuji pin Roderick Strong, and Bryan Danielson pin Claudio Castagnoli. Calgary's Lance



Ten years ago, Doink the Clown's character was phased out for being ineffective in the WWF's "Attitude Era." But as WWE embraces more PG-rated programming, Doink just may find a reason to return.

Storm even made an appearance.

For Ring of Honor, doing such a strong independent show in such a historic wrestling town was a great accomplishment. After all, Toronto has hosted legendary matches such as The Rock vs. Hulk Hogan (WrestleMania X-8), The Ultimate Warrior vs. Hulk Hogan (WrestleMania VI), and Lou Thesz vs. Buddy Rogers (leading to the formation of the WWWF).

"We have been trying to go to Toronto and Canada for a long time," ROH booker Gabe Sapolsky told *PWI*. "It just took until now for all the stars to come into alignment. The entire country of Canada has a long, storied, proud wrestling tradition. We hope that ROH can add to it."

ROH drew approximately the same number of fans for its video-on-demand taping in Detroit that same weekend, and the promotion attracted 2,200 fans for its most recent outing at the Manhattan Center in New York.

WWE goes PG ... What? No more vehicular homicide, no more male-on-female violence, no more Katie Vick incidents? For those of you who look forward to that sort of entertainment, you may be disappointed by the kinder, gentler tone that WWE plans to adopt in the future. On July 28, WWE announced that all of its weekly programs would be changed to strictly a PG rating. WWE shows were previously rated "TV-14—L, D, and V," reflecting strong language, sexual dialogue, and violence.

The change is intended to reflect the general trend toward PG programming both on broadcast and cable television. WWE programming probably won't change that much, except that blood and especially violent content will be heavily edited and the product—especially now that Freddie Prinze Jr. has become an adviser to WWE Creative—may emphasize humor over violence and shock value.

Stay by your phone, Doink! □

WWE Stockwatch

(For the period of June 1 to July 31, 2008)

60-Day High: 16.97 on July 24
60-Day Low: 13.94 on July 11
52-Week High: 19.86 on April 9, 2008
52-Week Low: 13.49 on August 7, 2007

WWE issued its second-quarter report on August 5, once again showing strong revenues totaling $129.7-million with net income of $7-million. Although gross income is down slightly from the $135-million WWE posted during the same period in 2007, net profit remains exactly the same. The only cause for alarm was the 29 percent spike in operating expenses. Live event, pay-per-view, video, and licensing sales all remained strong.

All three pay-per-views recorded during the second quarter did better than last year. Backlash rose from 194,000 to 200,000 buys, Judgment Day rose from 242,000 to 252,000 buys, and Night of Champions (previously named Vengeance) rose from 243,000 to 273,000. To put that in perspective, WrestleManias 23 and 24 earned approximately 1.1-million buys. Nevertheless, WWE did quite well, considering that the U.S. economy is much more sluggish this year, putting a strain on discretionary spending.

On August 1, WWE declared a quarterly dividend of 36 cents per share on its Class A shares of common stock. Again this quarter, the members of the McMahon family have waived 12 cents per share of their personal stock, receiving only 24 cents per share. The record date for the dividend was scheduled for September 15 and the payment date was set for September 25.

For those of you who think television producer Kevin Dunn has gained too much power in WWE, consider this: Dunn, along with private equity consultant Frank Riddick and Six Flags CFO Jeffrey Speed have been appointed to WWE's board of directors. With the resignation of Robert Bowman, there are currently 10 members.

TV breakdown

RAW (USA)

June 2: 3.1
June 9: 3.0
June 16: 3.3
June 23: 3.4
June 30: 3.5
July 7: 3.5
July 14: 3.2
July 21: 3.3
July 28: 3.6
August 4: 3.4

Analysis: There's no doubt wrestling scholars and analysts will be studying the effects of Shane and Stephanie McMahon's decision to appoint lackluster play-by-play man Mike Adamle to the position of Raw general manager. Judging by the most important barometer, the ratings, the mystery of whom would be named GM helped spike Raw's ratings to a 3.6 on July 28—Raw's highest rating in several months. The appointment of the charisma-challenged Adamle was not enough to maintain that momentum, as the rating dropped to 3.4 the following week, yet it doesn't seem that his appointment has caused any tangible harm. Smackdown has survived Vickie Guerrero, hasn't it? Nevertheless, Raw's overall summer rating is down by a half-point, compared to last year.

SMACKDOWN (CW)

June 6: 2.4
June 13: 2.2
June 20: 2.2
June 27: 2.2
July 4: 1.6
July 11: 2.3
July 18: 2.4
July 25: 2.4
August 1: 2.4

Analysis: Smackdown benefited greatly from the 2008 WWE draft, directly resulting from the acquisitions of WWE champion Triple-H and play-by-play announcer Jim Ross. Although Edge and General Manager Vickie Guerrero remain the centerpiece of the more soap-opera-like Smackdown, Triple-H's presence gives the blue brand a tangible feeling of top-tier status. That is complemented by the old-school chemistry exhibited by the broadcast team of Jim Ross and Mick Foley. Compared to the huckster hype exuded by previous combos (predominantly Michael Cole and Tazz), Ross and Foley's conversational style is a refreshing change of pace. All of this is working for Smackdown, which, after hitting bottom with a 1.6 on Independence Day, has boosted its overall rating from an average of 2.2 to 2.4.

ECW (Sci Fi)

June 3: 1.1
June 10: 1.1
June 17: 1.0
June 24: 1.2
July 1: 1.4
July 8: 1.4
July 15: 1.4
July 22: 1.5
July 29: 1.3
August 5: 1.5

Analysis: Who would have thought it? Without C.M. Punk, and with Mark Henry in the lead position as ECW champion, WWE's Sci Fi program has received the biggest boost since the 2008 talent draft on June 23—despite the fact that Henry was relegated to the supplemental draft on wwe.com. Barely cracking 1.0 just two months ago, ECW is routinely scoring overall ratings between 1.4 and 1.5 as of late. Much of the credit must go to Colin Delaney's heel turn and General Manager Theodore Long's "New Superstar" initiative, giving more prominence to up-and-comers such as Evan Bourne and Ricky Ortiz. But save some praise for ECW champ Mark Henry, who has been strengthened by the addition of Tony Atlas as his manager. The "World's Strongest Champion" is at least partially responsible for ECW's strongest ratings as of late.

IMPACT (Spike TV)

June 5: 0.9
June 12: 0.9
June 19: 1.0
June 26: 0.9
July 3: 1.0
July 10: 1.0
July 17: 1.1
July 24: 1.1
July 31: 1.1

Analysis: Like WWE programming, TNA did fairly well in June and July, despite the notion that the wrestling business—including television ratings—tend to drop off during the summer months. *Impact* has been scoring above the 1.0-mark on most weeks, which seemed to be unreachable territory one year ago. Still, it's a testament to the overwhelming strength of the WWE brand that star-studded editions of *Impact*—complete with Samoa Joe, Kurt Angle, Booker T, and Sting—score a half-point lower than ECW main events featuring Mark Henry, Colin Delaney, and Chavo Guerrero Jr. TNA continues to experiment with its production, with its video packages usually surpassing those of WWE, and now using more hip-hop music throughout the program. They've come a long way since the Nashville Fairgrounds!

your holiday GIFT to you!

50% OFF NEWSSTAND PRICE

You're racking your brain trying to come up with the perfect holiday gifts for your friends and family. But you're probably forgetting about the most important person in your life—**you!**

It's time you started treating yourself as well as you do others. And we're here to help.

For a very limited time, we're offering subscriptions to the London Publishing family of wrestling magazines at 50 percent off the newsstand price!

Of course, you can use this special offer to purchase gift subscriptions and we'll send out a gift card alerting the recipient of your generosity—but wouldn't that be selfishly depriving yourself of something you always wanted? Hey, it's your choice.

HURRY! THIS OFFER EXPIRES DECEMBER 31, 2008!

	NEWSSTAND	50% OFF	YOURS	GIFT
Pro Wrestling Illustrated (LPWP) 12 ISSUES	$108.40	$54.20	☐	☐
Inside Wrestling/The Wrestler (LINW) 6 ISSUES	$59.70	$29.85	☐	☐

Please indicate method of payment:

☐ **Check or money order (enclosed and payable to Sports & Entertainment Publications, LLC)**

☐ VISA ☐ MasterCard

Card #_____

Expiration Date: ____/____
MO/YR

Signature:_____

☐ New Subscription ☐ Renewal

THIS GIFT IS FOR:

NAME_____

ADDRESS_____

CITY_____ STATE_____ ZIP_____

XCB08X

YOUR NAME_____

ADDRESS_____

CITY_____ STATE_____ ZIP_____

PHONE_____ E-MAIL_____

XCB08R

Pro Wrestling Illustrated: For Canada: $87.20 for 12 issues (airmail only); for all other countries: $144.20 for 12 issues. Inside Wrestling/The Wrestler: For Canada: $46.35 for 6 issues; for all other countries: $74.85 for 6 issues. International money orders only in U.S. funds only. Please allow up to eight weeks before you receive your first magazine. **Offer expires December 31, 2008.**

Send to: Sports & Entertainment Publications, LLC, P.O. Box 529, Mt. Morris, IL 61054-0529

7806/10-07

the trade's mark

By Frank Ingiosi

MUCH MORE IS made about which promotion a wrestler comes from and who influenced him or her in the ring than that wrestler's ethnicity or upbringing—and for good reason. The hard truth: As much as some of us would like to believe there is still "sport" left in sports-entertainment, there's an even greater percentage of entertainment.

For example, take The Undertaker: Not *really* dead. Sorry to burst your bubble.

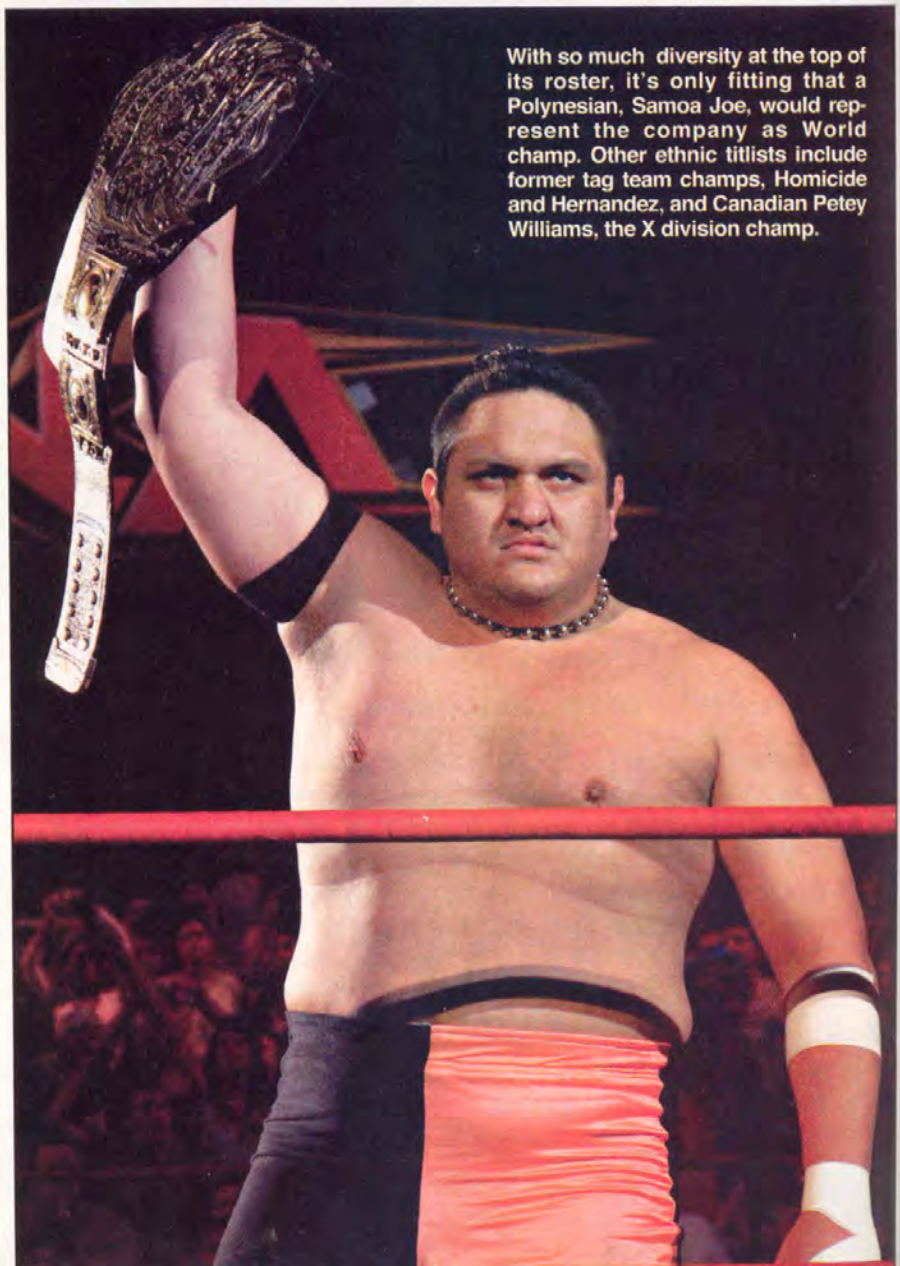
'Taker's just a highly talented grappler with an in-ring persona that stuck way past anyone's expectations. But, that still doesn't mean fans everywhere don't go absolutely bananas at the first toll of a bell. The athletic aspect of wrestling is what satisfies purists' need for sport. The pageantry and glitz make it valuable to the networks that broadcast it worldwide. In a positive way—by and large—the issues of ethnicity and race are afterthoughts to what happens in the ring.

While I have to say I absolutely fall on the side of celebrating the accomplishments and merits of *all* competitors, regardless of their ethnicity, there's a truly remarkable situation occurring in TNA right now.

Yes, I criticize a lot of what TNA does as well as the zigzag path it is taking toward legitimacy. But I have to admit I was impressed while checking out the promotion's website the other day.

As of late-summer, TNA's championship roster was as diverse an ethnic group as I've seen in years. The World champion was a large Samoan, and his top challenger, at that time, was a five-time former world champion who also happens to be African-American. Both men were highly decorated champions who were more than worthy of demanding the spotlight. On top of that, they're still both excellent wrestlers who love to talk a big game. In a feud as truly exciting as theirs, it's no wonder that the cultural differences between Booker T and Samoa Joe were never really pointed out.

Moving further down the line, the TNA X division title was held by Petey Williams, who took the belt from Jay Lethal before being injured in the spring. Apparently, the medication Williams was given for the pain had warped his mind. "Maple Leaf Muscle" quickly began emulating Scott Steiner, which earned him the new nickname "Little Petey Pump." Lethal, meanwhile, still believed he was Randy Savage. So, in the whirlwind of all this goofiness, the fact was ignored that one of the top Canadian wrestlers in the world defeated one of the top African-American wrestlers in the world for a championship. That's



With so much diversity at the top of its roster, it's only fitting that a Polynesian, Samoa Joe, would represent the company as World champ. Other ethnic titlists include former tag team champs, Homicide and Hernandez, and Canadian Petey Williams, the X division champ.

She might not be the current champion, but Awesome Kong is still considered TNA's most dominant female. But she has a lot of competition. The women's roster is as diverse as the men's.

the power of intriguing storylines and great talent.

Perhaps most intriguing are the situations surrounding the TNA World tag team and the Knockouts championships. Perennial favorites the Latin American Exchange rightfully held the top spot and seemed poised to hold it for as long as they saw fit until they ran up against Beer Money Inc., anway. What originally started off as a surprisingly divisive and controversial group ended up as, perhaps, one of the most talented tag teams of the past 15 years. LAX was built on a platform of perceived racial inequality and, given the opportunity to show their abilities, Hernandez and Homicide did just that, capturing championship gold in the process. Nothing was ever handed to the group in TNA. In fact, they've taken out all-time great tandems such as Team 3D, the former Voodoo Kin Mafia, and the Steiners in the process. It's a great story and probably one worthy of more attention than it received.

Finally, we have Awesome Kong. What can be said about Kong that already hasn't been written a thousand times? The woman is simply one of the most dominant forces in wrestling, male or female. With her lethal combination of size and ability, Kong dictated the pace of TNA's Knockouts division. Despite a mid-summer upset at the hands of relative-newcomer Taylor Wilde, Kong embodied women's wrestling in TNA. The only woman who came close to truly matching her talent and determination was Gail Kim, a Canadian of Asian decent.

The underlying point is that all these wrestlers are tremendously talented competitors who earned their spots at the top. The cultural diversity that exists throughout TNA should excite every fan reading this and be a lesson to wrestling promotions around the world.

There's no substitute for great wrestling between competitors with strong personalities and intriguing storylines. At times, TNA has lost sight of that. But, I will give the organization credit for reaching out to Japan and Mexico. By maintaining its own culturally and ethnically diverse roster, TNA is growing its global appeal in a way that rivals WWE's European, Middle Eastern, and Asian efforts.

Fans worldwide will show up in droves to see a WWE card regardless of who is competing solely because the machine is so big and the advertising so grandiose that it seems like you'd be a fool for missing it. TNA, on the other hand, makes fans *want* to see their cards by promising top-tier talent and showcasing wrestlers from all corners of the globe and, for this cynic, that's the best part of the promotion. □

DON'T MISS

PWI UPDATE WITH FRANK INGIOSI

EXCLUSIVELY ON: pwi-online.com

Pro Wrestling Illustrated Senior Writer Frank Ingiosi is insightful, provocative, and downright funny! You've read "The Trade's Mark" in *PWI*. Now check out Frank's column, "The Turn," every Friday afternoon.

Ingiosi on women wrestling: "Sorry, WWE fans. But, as I've been chastised for in the past, I'll take a sound wrestling match between two women who know how to have one over two models/actresses rolling around in lingerie. Now, of course that only pertains to my chosen profession and not everyday life, in which case, the roles are completely reversed. But, when it comes to being part of a wrestling program, give me talent over catfights any day of the week."

Ingiosi on *Impact* going live: "Perhaps it's the mystery of what could happen now that fans aren't drawn into reading spoilers online for the prior two weeks; maybe it's just the thrill of those in attendance being able to tell their friends and families that they'll be on TV tonight and not some time in April. Whatever it is, last night's *Impact* came off with a renewed energy and excitement that TNA has lacked for quite some time."

Ingiosi on Ted DiBiase Jr.'s Raw debut: "The excitement surrounding the debut of the younger DiBiase is palpable and his surprise debut is much sooner than originally anticipated. The highly touted third-generation grappler should add to an increasingly solid foundation for the company and, if he pans out as promised, may be a mainstay for quite some time. No rips here—just wishing the new guy well."

Frank Ingiosi ... on pwi-online.com!

7813/10.07

win, lose, or draw

By Harry Burkett

JOEY MATTHEWS PLANTED Claudio Castagnoli with an evenflow DDT, exhaustedly covered the Swiss star for the lateral press, and scored the pinfall, causing the capacity crowd at the Green Room in Dundalk, Maryland, to erupt into cheers. They weren't necessarily cheering for Matthews, but for the moment. It is the moment that occurs once a year ... when the traditional six-way elimination match for the Shane Shamrock Memorial Cup thins down to two men.

The entire Maryland Championship Wrestling roster—as well as top independent stars on hand specifically for the tournament—gathered around the ring. Fans stood on the floor and on the bleachers. Special referee Bill Alfonso grabbed a bottle of water and allowed young Derek Frazier—who was lying on the mat—to take a drink. He quickly wiped the perspiration from Frazier's brow. Alfonso went over to Matthews, allowed him to take a guzzle, and wiped his forehead.

It was only a brief respite. A few seconds later, Matthews and Frazier were nose to nose. They traded slaps, then punches. The intensity mounted as they engaged in multiple go-behind switches and escapes.

Something was happening that Matthews didn't quite understand. He was battling a mirror image of himself: the 1998 version of Joey Matthews. Frazier, despite his cockiness and conceit, had found his way into the hearts of MCW fans. Matthews, who had sweated and bled for MCW over the past decade, the man who had represented the promotion in ECW, TNA, and finally WWE, was being jeered. The same guy who had emerged from the obscurity of the Mid-Atlantic indy circuit to become a WWE tag team champion, the same man whose face was permanently mutilated by a ladder on a WWE pay-per-view, was getting booed by the fans he had tried so hard to make proud.

Instead, the fans were cheering for this ungrateful, snot-nosed kid. Fairly or unfairly, the fans sensed that Frazier knew where he came from—and, somewhere between Joey Matthews and Joey Mercury, their longtime hero had forgotten that.

Good enough, thought Matthews, *I'm gonna cripple this punk.*

Matthews knew he could do it—quite easily. Back in December, Frazier was embroiled in a feud with 2007 Shamrock Cup winner Josh Daniels. Frazier was forced to defend his MCW cruiserweight title against Daniels on December 26 in Glen Burnie, Maryland. During the match, Frazier pretended that he had blown out his right knee and was carried from the ring by paramedics. With Daniels' back turned, the dastardly Frazier slid back into the ring and jumped his rival. Daniels' shoulder hit Frazier's leg during the melee, causing Frazier's *right* knee to be blown out—legitimately.

Frazier struggled to stand, but collapsed every time. Adding insult to injury, the crowd chanted, "Wrong leg, stupid!" The cruiserweight belt was awarded to Daniels.

Talk about bad karma. Frazier was rushed to the hospital. X-rays didn't detect any broken bones, but the massive swelling indicated that something was very wrong. Frazier left the hospital with a brace that ran from his thigh to his ankle. Two days later, an MRI revealed that he had torn his anterior cruciate ligament and meniscus.

Frazier underwent therapy three times per week prior to surgery in February. He was told that his leg strength would diminish by 25 percent as a result of the procedure, so it was important to build up his

Photos by Tim Walker

And then there were two. Joey Matthews pinned Claudio Castagnoli to face Derek Frazier in the final round off the Shane Shamrock Memorial Cup. While the fans cheered for Matthews' in this moment, they were jeering him against Frazier soon after.

Photos by Tim Walker

Defying doctor's orders to delay an in-ring return from his 2007 leg injury, Frazier came to the Shamrock Cup and left with the trophy in his possession.

muscle. Tiny electric shocks were sent through his knee, he received therapeutic heat treatment, and he lifted weights attached to his ankle.

The surgery left him bedridden for about a week and a half. He would hobble around for the next eight weeks. He was advised to stay away from wrestling for the rest of the year.

Yet Frazier desperately wanted to compete in the Shamrock Cup. He returned to therapy. Maybe if he regained most of the strength in his knee, maybe if he didn't wrestle in any matches before the Cup, and maybe if luck was on his side, he could be ready by July.

Frazier didn't appear at the Green Room until the second evening of the two-night event. Most fans knew the extent of Frazier's injury and were shocked to see him ready for action. During the final qualifying match for the six-way main event, the fans—perhaps feeling guilty for heckling him when he had suffered a legit injury months before—cheered Frazier as he beat Pelle Primeau, Devon Moore, and Ruckus in a "Last Chance Scramble." Frazier would join Claudio Castagnoli, Rhett Titus, Crowbar, Joey Matthews, and old rival Josh Daniels in the six-way elimination bout for the Cup.

The trick knee had fared well so far. Frazier even gained sweet revenge against Daniels, using his patented package piledriver to eliminate Daniels from the six-way.

It came down to MCW past vs. MCW future: Matthews vs. Frazier. Would Frazier's knee become a target? Even Matthews—the 2001 Shamrock Cup winner—hadn't been that ruthless yet.

That changed when Matthews executed an inverted atomic drop on Frazier. Landing on his feet, Frazier felt his knee pop despite the metal brace. He fell to the mat in agony. Frazier was not feigning injury. He was legitimately hurt.

Matthews saw his opportunity for Shamrock Cup glory squirming on the mat. Would he punish the knee? Or would he be a decent human being?

He went for the knee. Matthews yanked and jerked that knee. Up and down, wrenching this way and that, the former member of M-N-M seemed quite willing to cripple the up-and-comer. Matthews applied the sharpshooter amid a cascade of boos.

Realizing that Frazier would not submit, Matthews executed his own package piledriver, but scored only a near-fall. Matthews went for a series of lateral presses, yet Frazier kicked out every time. The momentum was shifting. Most of the MCW wrestlers clapped against the ring apron as the fans stomped the bleachers in unison.

At the urging of his manager, Kim Payne, Matthews grabbed a steel chair to put a real hurting on Frazier. But referee Bill Alfonso grabbed the chair, tossed it back toward Matthews, and ... *Wham!* Frazier, hopping on one leg, kicked the chair into Matthews' face, perfectly executing a Van Daminator. Alfonso made the three-count and declared Frazier the winner of the 2008 Shamrock Cup.

After the celebration, Frazier limped to the backstage area, where trainers placed ice on his swollen knee. He hadn't felt the same tearing sensation as he had in December, so he remained cautiously optimistic that the Shamrock Cup would not be his final stand.

"Even if I never make it big, I'll always have this moment," winced Frazier. "This sore spot on my knee will always be a reminder that I lived out my dream. That's good enough for me." □

the straight shooter

By Dan Murphy

IN 2004, THE hottest feud in Ring of Honor was the best-of-three series between the reigning ROH champion, Samoa Joe, and the hungry "straightedge" challenger, C.M. Punk.

In the first bout, on June 14 in Dayton, Ohio, Punk and Joe wrestled to a 60-minute draw. In a rematch four months later in Punk's hometown of Chicago, they went another 60 minutes without a decisive winner in one of the most critically acclaimed matches of the decade.

Finally, on December 4, 2004, Joe managed to beat Punk in a match with former World champions Mick Foley and Ricky Steamboat looking on in admiration.

A lot has changed in four years. Joe eventually left ROH for TNA. He made an immediate impact and dominated the X division, but was largely eclipsed by Kurt Angle when the Olympic gold medalist jumped into the fold from WWE. It took a few years, but Joe finally managed to defeat Angle and win the TNA World title at Lockdown.

Punk went on to win the ROH title he coveted so much by beating Austin Aries, the man who ended Joe's ROH title run. He then signed with WWE, actually signing his WWE contract on top of the ROH title belt to the disgust of ROH fans. After a year in Ohio Valley, Punk was called up to the ECW brand and eventually won the ECW title. On June 30, Punk cashed in the "Money In The Bank" title shot he won at WrestleMania 24 and pinned the incapacitated Edge to win the World title on Raw.

C.M. Punk (above) and Samoa Joe (right) became champions within their respective companies after leaving Ring of Honor. If they aren't getting their due respect, they may have only themselves to blame.

The ROH icons are both world champions. They are two of the most popular and highly regarded wrestlers in the sport today, representing a new breed of competitors equally adept in technical wrestling and mixed martial arts-style competition.

So how come they're the Rodney Dangerfields of professional wrestling? They're just not getting any respect.

Joe had enormous momentum and looked destined to become TNA's franchise player, but he lost ground when Christian Cage, Angle, Sting, and Booker T all appeared on the scene and pushed him further into the background. Joe was in a touchy situation, and he didn't handle it well. Instead of seeing the influx of these veteran competitors as a growth opportunity for TNA and himself, he sulked. He whined. He complained. At Turning Point 2007, his resentment bubbled over, and he cut a lengthy, expletive-laden promo ripping Scott Hall for no-showing a match.

In the heat of the moment, Joe forgot a sacrosanct wrestling truth: Tough guys don't bitch and moan.

Joe eventually beat Angle, and the "Samoan Submission Machine" continues to be one of the most popular stars in TNA. But he has lost the aura he had two years ago when he was annihilating A.J. Styles and Christopher Daniels and carrying around a blood-soaked towel as a reminder of the beating he handed the "Fallen Angel." Angle and Booker T have strategically outmaneuvered Joe, and it looks like it'll just be a matter of time before Kevin Nash exploits him to take the World title.

Instead of becoming the juggernaut of TNA, Joe has turned into a guy who falls for obvious traps and whines about every slight—real or perceived. Joe is the Jan Brady of TNA.

Punk isn't getting much respect on Raw, either. John Bradshaw Layfield called Punk out for cashing in his MITB shot when Edge was injured by Batista and in no condition to compete. In ensuing weeks, his title defenses against JBL and Batista have been marred by outside interference, creating a perception that Punk has relied on luck to keep his title. Batista has laid Punk out several times now, seemingly with ease. Though Punk has kept the title, clean wins have been hard to come by lately.

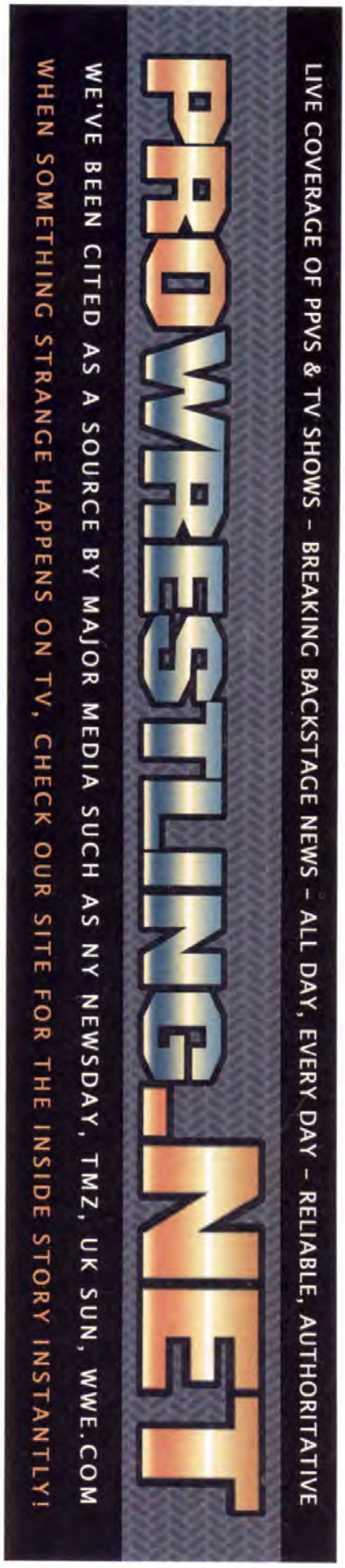
So what's the deal with Punk and Joe? Are they victims of some sort of conspiracy ... of lousy booking and unfortunate circumstances that make them look weak? Maybe they're just naïve. Maybe they don't realize that perception can matter every bit as much as wins and losses. They may be champions, but they hardly come off as secure. In fact, there's a good chance that one—or both—of them could lose their championships by the time this magazine hits newsstands.

It shouldn't be this way. Joe and Punk are two of the most dynamic and talented competitors in the sport. They have worked extremely hard to rise up through the independent circuit and get to where they are today. They are champions ... but they are in no position to rest on their laurels.

There are a lot of people who would like nothing better than to see Punk and Joe fail. They'd like to see these indy darlings with the passionate fringe fan bases tank in the ratings and embarrass themselves. If they fail, that leaves more room for the likes of Triple-H, Kurt Angle, Edge, Jeff Jarrett, and others.

But wrestling *needs* people like Joe and Punk. It *needs* new stars. Punk can't continue to allow himself to be a patsy for Batista and Kane. Joe can't continue to allow himself to be a patsy for Booker and Nash.

They need to rediscover the aggression, hunger, and swagger they displayed four years ago, the passion that made them the two most talked-about young stars on the indy scene. If they don't, both Joe and Punk could be back on the indy circuit four years from now. □


LIVE COVERAGE OF PPVS & TV SHOWS - BREAKING BACKSTAGE NEWS - ALL DAY, EVERY DAY - RELIABLE, AUTHORITATIVE
PRO WRESTLING NET
WE'VE BEEN CITED AS A SOURCE BY MAJOR MEDIA SUCH AS NY NEWSDAY, TMZ, UK SUN, WWE.COM
WHEN SOMETHING STRANGE HAPPENS ON TV, CHECK OUR SITE FOR THE INSIDE STORY INSTANTLY!

You're at the airport. You see your favorite wrestler relaxing in one of the terminals. You rush up to him or her as questions fill your excited mind. There are certain things you just have to know about this person. Well, these are the 12 questions you'd never think of asking

12 questions

JOHN McCHESNEY

1

What has been your greatest win to date?

There were three wins that are equally great. All of them stand out in my mind. First, at IWC's Super Indy 4, I beat C.M. Punk, Glenn Spectre, and Low-Ki all in one night to win the Super Indy title. Also, beating A.J. Styles in a singles match and beating Christopher Daniels in a cage, while he was X division champion were very special victories for me. I was so fabulous in all three.

2

You recently went from being "Fabulous" to being "Big League." What's the difference between the two?

I'm "Fabulous" because I am the definition of fabulous. I am great at everything I do. But the fans already know that. What they don't know is why I'm "Big League." I'm "Big League" because that's where I hope to be—the big leagues. Actually, I got that name when I asked a promoter in Cleveland for more money and he said I was trying to be big league. I liked that, so I decided to call myself "Big League."

3

What's the cheesiest pick-up line you ever used?

Um ... I don't need pick-up lines, thank you very much.

4

What's the last movie you saw where you wanted to walk out of the theater?

I just watched *The Lost Boys: The Tribe.* It was terrible, except for Corey Feldman. He's still The Man after all these years.

5

If you had your choice, what old-school WWF manager would you choose to guide your career?

He wasn't a WWF guy, but I have to say James J. Dillon. He kept The Horsemen riding in style, and made sure they were where they needed to be. There are very few managers around who are as accomplished as J.J.

6

Which do you prefer: foosball or bubble hockey?

Air hockey. I'm great at that just like everything else I do.

7

Fill in the blank: When I'm not wrestling, you can usually find me _____.

At the gym, out on the town, or on the golf course. That's pretty much my life outside of being in the ring.

8

What's the most frightened you have ever been in the ring?

One was when Matt Morgan gave me his finisher at the Ballpark Brawl. That's a far way to fall. Another time was when I was teaming with Jimmy Jacobs as Fabu-Huss. Chris Hamrick gave Jimmy a piledriver off the second rope. They landed awkwardly and Jimmy wasn't moving. I was unbelievably concerned for him. I was so happy he wasn't hurt.

9

If you had to wear a mask and compete in Mexico, what would be your lucha name?

El Nightmare Kid. I'd wear my hair down in my face and look scary.

10

If you could steal one wrestler's gimmick, whose would it be?

Let's get this straight. I don't need to steal anyone's gimmick. I'm "Big League." I'm "Fabulous." In fact, I have to worry about people stealing *my* gimmick.

11

What's your favorite video game?

I like the old-school Sega Genesis, *NHL 96.* I liked the last Doom game, too.

12

What's the most embarrassing CD in your collection?

Probably the soundtrack to the David Bowie movie *Labyrinth.* Is that too bad? □

The Wrestling Observer
Hall of Fame

In each issue, *PWI* will honor one member of the *Wrestling Observer* Hall of Fame, which we recognize as the sport's official Hall of Fame

Killer Kowalski

ONE OF WRESTLING'S most famous villains of the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, Wladek "Killer" Kowalski can also lay claim to being one of the most successful trainers in the sport, having trained Triple-H, Big John Studd, The Executioners, and dozens of other stars at his school in North Andover, Massachusetts.

Born and raised in Windsor, Ontario, Canada, Kowalski found work in an auto plant, working alongside his father, a Polish immigrant. The younger Kowalski was on his way to a career as an electrical engineer, until a chance encounter with an amateur wrestling coach at the local YMCA.

At 6'7" and weighing more than 250 pounds (280 in his prime), Kowalski stood out from the other young men, and the coach quickly approached him about learning how to wrestle. The athletic Kowalski took to the grappling game, and, in 1947, he started his pro wrestling career, competing mainly in preliminary matches in Michigan and Ohio before receiving an offer to compete in the Mecca of wrestling at the time, St. Louis, Missouri.

With an ever-present scowl across his face, and usually standing almost a foot taller than most of his opponents, "Tarzan" Kowalski was a natural heel, but a freak accident in 1954 made an indelible mark on his career.

Kowalski was wrestling the popular Yukon Eric in Montreal. As he often did, he tied up Eric's leg in the ropes and climbed up to the top rope, intent on delivering his signature kneedrop. However, for some reason—either Kowalski misjudged his jump or Eric made a sudden movement—Kowalski's shinbone sheared against the side of Eric's head and ripped off his left ear.

The referee immediately stopped the match, awarding the bout to Kowalski. A couple of days later, he went to visit Eric in the

The 6'7" Kowalski has huge hands that, placed correctly, could incapacitate an opponent (in this case, John Tolos). The origin of the name "Killer" had more to do with his attitude than his clawhold finisher.

hospital. When Kowalski saw Eric's head almost entirely wrapped up in bandages, it struck him as funny and he laughed. That story got out to the wrestling press, who wondered just what kind of sadist goes to visit a man in the hospital and laughs at him. From then on the press dubbed him "Killer," and the name stuck.

Over the next three decades, Kowalski did everything he could to be one of the sport's most infamous villains. He broke the leg of fellow Hall of Famer Buddy Rogers, and stunned the fans with his brutality when he bodyslammed Bill Miller from the ring onto the arena floor. He further enhanced his reputation as a baddie when he attacked popular talk show host Don Lane, applying his dreaded stomach claw when Lane insinuated pro wrestling was less than authentic.

Kowalski's wrestling career spanned nearly 30 years, and brought him through all of the major territories in the U.S., Canada, and all over the world. By his own estimation, Kowalski has competed in more than 6,000 matches throughout the course of his career.

Among the major singles championships Kowalski collected were the NWA Texas title, the NWA Central States title, the NWA Florida Southern title, the NWA Mid-Pacific U.S. title, the NWA Americas heavyweight title, the NWA Pacific Coast title, and the NWA Canadian heavyweight title (twice).

Kowalski also held the Montreal Athletic Commission International championship on 12 occasions and was a five-time International Wrestling Alliance champion. He also won tag team titles with Miller, Skull Murphy, Mark Lewin, Gorilla Monsoon, and Gene Kiniski, among others. He went under a hood to team with his protégé, a young Big John Studd, as the masked Executioners, and the team won the WWWF U.S. tag team title.

In the 1960s and 1970s, Kowalski worked several programs against Bruno Sammartino, challenging for the World Wide Wrestling Federation title. Kowalski was one of the few men Bruno couldn't overpower and was one of the most difficult challenges Sammartino ever faced. Kowalski was also a thorn in the side of world champions Lou Thesz, Pedro Morales, and "Whipper" Billy Watson, and had several memorable matches against Gorgeous George.

Kowalski's size and strength often gave him an advantage over superior wrestlers like Lou Thesz, whom he holds with one hand and pounds with the other during a 1962 match in Houston, Texas.

Kowalski retired in 1977 and opened one of the first pro wrestling schools in the country the following year. One of wrestling's most widely respected ambassadors, Kowalski was inducted into both the *Wrestling Observer* Hall of Fame and the WWE Hall of Fame in 1996, and was enshrined by the Professional Wrestling Hall of Fame and Museum in 2003. In 2002, he received the prestigious Iron Mike Mazurki Award from the Cauliflower Alley Club.

In 2006, Kowalski married for the first time, at the age of 79.

Earlier this year, he was admitted to a rehabilitation center for physical therapy for his knees. Then, on August 8, he suffered a heart attack and remained in critical condition as this issue went to press. □

independent roundup

By Al Alven

CHAOS IS THE norm in Combat Zone Wrestling, but the results from A Tangled Web at the New Alhambra Arena in South Philadelphia truly set the promotion on its ear.

The event saw three of CZW's major titles change hands, highlighted by **Drake Younger** taking the CZW championship from veteran **Nick Gage** in a "Tangled Web Death Match." "The Psycho Shooter" is now a dual champion, having defeated **Brain Damage** for the CZW ultra violent underground title back in February.

The undercard saw **Team An-Drew** (**Andy Sumner** & **Drew Gulak**) defeat the **Naptown Dragons** (**Dustin Lee** & **Scotty Vortekz**) to capture the company's tag team title, and Brain Damage beat **D.J. Hyde** to win the Iron Man championship.

"This is a new day for CZW, but there was no stopping this. It was inevitable," explained a typically bloody Younger, holding both championship belts in the locker room after the event. "These are symbolic of the long, hard journey I've taken, and the long, violent road ahead for CZW. As long as I possess these championships, I am the most powerful force in hardcore wrestling.

"They'll have to kill me to take them away from me. Good luck with that!"

Ring of Honor continued the expansion of its international horizons with its long-awaited Canadian debut at the Ted Reeve Arena in Toronto. An estimated 1,500 fans attended the show, making it one of the most successful in company history.

ROH owner **Cary Silken** stated afterward that the company would like to make Toronto a regular stop in its loop, which already includes large U.S. markets like New York, Philadelphia, and Chicago.

The main event of the evening featured a wild and bloody no-disqualification match between ROH tag team champions **Jimmy Jacobs** & **Tyler Black** against **Austin Aries** & **Jay Briscoe.** The crowd exploded when **Mark Briscoe** hit the ring, making his return from injury, to help fend off the interfering **Necro Butcher**, aiding his brother and Aries score the win.

Fans at the Ted Reeve Arena in Toronto, Ontario, erupted into cheers when Mark Briscoe ran to the aid of his brother, Jay, and partner Austin Aires, after Necro Butcher interfered on behalf of Jimmy Jacobs and Tyler Black. This was Mark's first appearance in the ring since sustaining a wrist injury in April.

In another action-packed affair, ROH champion **Nigel McGuinness** successfully defended his title against Quebec native **Kevin Steen**, who might have received the warmest reception of any wrestler on the card.

The company is scheduled for a return to Japan for two shows in mid-August, both at Differ Ariake in Tokyo.

In NWA news, new Texas tag team champions were crowned on July 19 when **The Texas Regulators** (**Crash** & **Widowmaker**) defeated **The Blacktinos** (**Galan Ramirez** & **D.J. King**) in Dallas. The match essentially ended up a handicap bout when King was taken from the ring complaining of dizziness and a lack of feeling in one of his arms. As he was being loaded into an ambulance, Ramirez was easy pickings for the Regulators.

"There are days where injuries are going to happen and injuries affect outcomes," fumed Ramirez, while demanding a rematch the following day. "I am not taking anything away from The Texas Regulators because the injury was not their fault, nor was it illegal on their part. But how much pride can they have today in winning our title when my partner is down and out and can't move at all? I see no glory in winning our belts with a two-on-one finish involved!"

In the wake of **Mickie "Moose" Knuckles**' devastating leg injury, TNA is said to be heavily re-evaluating the outside booking of it talent on independent cards.

Knuckles, who was poised for a push in the Knockouts division, suffered a broken femur during an IWA: Mid-South match against **Sara Del Rey** in early-summer.

TNA had talent booked for various indy and international groups in the past as a way to create revenue, but the company is doing much better financially these days and no longer needs to rely on this method as it once did.

While TNA President **Dixie Carter** has publicly stated Knuckles will have a spot on the roster when she returns from the injury, there's no way company officials could have been happy that an emerging TNA superstar would have executed such a risky maneuver (Moose attempted to splash Del Rey from a wall) before a crowd of just 60 people.

Down in Florida, **Erik Stevens** has emerged as the victor in his long, intense feud with former mentor **Roderick Strong**. The culmination of the rivalry saw Stevens regain the Full Impact Pro championship from Strong in a bloody dog-collar match in Crystal River.

After the match, an exhausted Stevens was brutally assaulted by **Go Shiozaki** and **The Heartbreak Express** (**Sean** & **Phil Davis**). Shiozaki, who defeated Ring of Honor champion Nigel McGuinness in a non-title match earlier in the show, was then introduced as the newest member of **Heartbreak Enterprises**. The Davis brothers proclaimed Shiozaki as the number-one contender to Stevens' newly won championship, and are demanding a title match for him.

Stevens originally took the FIP title from Strong at ROH's Final Battle show last December, only to drop the belt back to his nemesis in April. He was impressive during his abbreviated first run, and many observers are anxious to see what he can do with a chance to run with the strap.

Obviously, he'll have to get by the dangerous Shiozaki first.

Speaking of the Sunshine State, the long-awaited unveiling of the new Florida Championship Wrestling Arena and initial television tapings for the promotion took place on July 17 in Tampa with many representatives from WWE on hand to usher in the benchmark event for its developmental affiliate.

Mickie "Moose" Knuckles, the rising TNA Knockout, broke her femur in an IWA match against Sara del Rey. The injury has forced TNA to revisit its policy of allowing independent leagues to book its talent.

"It really turned out beautifully. I'm really excited about it," FCW President **Steve Keirn** said of the new arena, which also houses a training facility and television studio. "I can't wait for everyone to see it and put it to full use.

"WWE fans ought to be excited about the future. The FCW talent is very competitive now. They see people getting injured and retiring [in WWE]. We have 60 talents from around the world, representing 14 different countries. For the fans, it's exciting to know that there's going to be up-and-coming stars that they can see here in Florida. Or, they might see them showcased in WWE."

In a departure from the norm, WWE included information and photos of the arena unveiling on WWE.com. In the past, the company rarely, if ever, made even a passing mention of its developmental affiliates. WWE even confirmed in an early-July press release that FCW is based on the legendary Championship Wrestling from Florida territory, referencing such stars as **Dusty Rhodes**, Keirn, **Mike Graham**, **Jack Brisco**, **Gerry Brisco**, **Barry Windham**, **Kevin Sullivan**, **Dick Slater**, and Hall of Fame announcer **Gordon Solie**.

Recent Title Changes

3K Wrestling Fighting Athletes, Limerick, PA, June 29: **The Inner Circle** beat **Larry Legend** & **Paul Jaurdine** to claim the 3KWFA tag team title ... ***Insanity Pro Wrestling, Indianapolis, IN, July 5:*** **Dustin Rayz** & **Hillbilly Jedd** beat **Scotty Vortekz** & **Diehard Dustin Lee** to win the IPW tag team title ... ***Triton Championship Wrestling, Mountain City, TN, July 5:*** **Mikkie McMasters** defeated **Exotica** to become new TCW U.S. champion ... ***BFW Wrestling Alliance, Lafayette, IN, July 6:*** **Osyris** defeated **Billy Roc** to win the BFW All-Invitational title ... ***KAPOW Wrestling, Lenoir City, TN, July 12:*** **Sigmon** defeated **Shane Williams** and **Donovan Daniels** in a three-way match to become the first ever KAPOW heavyweight champion ... ***Xtreme Intense Championship Wrestling, Pontiac, MI, July 13:*** **Eddie Venom** won a 15-man bunkhouse weapons battle royal to win the vacant XICW Xtreme title, last eliminating **The DBA** ... **Josh Raymond** defeated **Kid Hybrid** to win the XICW light heavyweight title ... ***Top Rope Promotions, Fall River, MA, July 18:*** **The Alden Brothers** beat **The Stroke** in a steel cage match to win the TRP tag team title ... ***Slam All-Star Wrestling, Highgate, VT, July 19:*** **The Bull** defeated **Mickey Mudd** to win the SASW championship ... ***Price of Glory Wrestling, Coldwater, MI, July 20:*** **Dollar** defeated **Chip Daley** and **Jimmy Shalwin** to become the new POG Chaotic champion. □

the international report

By Bill Meltzer

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN **Carlito** and WWE has been severely strained as of late. But despite reports to the contrary, the company did not have a problem with Carlito appearing for his father **Carlos Colon**'s WWC promotion in Puerto Rico in conjunction with the main event of promotion's biggest card of the year, Anniversario 2008.

Carlito, who is very popular in Puerto Rico, became embroiled in a feud between the Colon clan (Carlos Sr., Carlos' son and WWE developmental wrestler **Eddie Colon**, and nephew **Orlando Colon**) and the top WWC heels, primarily led by former WWC, IWA and NWA champion **Ray Gonzalez**.

In the buildup to Anniversario 2008, Gonzalez wrestled a series of matches against Orlando, the last of which saw Gonzalez (who had returned to WWC as the masked **El Condor**) unmask and badmouth all of the Colons. Carlito showed up at the promotion's next major show, whereupon Gonzalez threw coffee on his shirt and slapped Carlos.

Some former WWE stars made rare appearances at WWC's Anniversario 2008 show, including Bobby Lashley, Trevor Murdoch, and, of course, Carlos Colon's son Carlito. Also competing in the show was current TNA star Rhino.

At the Anniversario show, young star Carlito was favored to win against the veteran Gonzalez, but it was Gonzalez who prevailed. After the bout, Carlito shook Gonzalez' hand and praised him as a good teacher. He then demonstrated the point by giving Gonzalez his backstabber move and spitting an apple in his face.

Former ECW champion **Bobby Lashley** took a break from his fledgling MMA career to work the Anniversario show, beating TNA's **Rhino**. The event also saw Eddie Colon defeat recently released WWE wrestler **Trevor Murdoch**.

Ultra-popular lucha libre star **Mistico** will kick off a world tour that will take him around Asia and Europe. In an interview, Mistico likened himself to Mexico's all-time biggest wrestling star, **Mil Mascaras**, whose fame outside Mexico took off when he wrestled extensively around U.S. territories as a special attraction and appeared overseas. Mistico boldly predicted that he will surpass Mascaras' legacy as an international box-office draw.

Manabu Nakanishi has a history of defeating top stars in Japan when there is no title belt at stake, but inevitably comes up a little short when there's a major championship at stake. That pattern held true yet again, as IWGP champion **Keiji Muto** turned back

Naskanishi's challenge despite being on the defensive for most of their encounter at the Tsukisamu Green Dome in Sapporo. Muto finally finished off Nakanishi with his famous moonsault press.

The legendary **Jushin Liger** may be taking a short break from the ring in the near future to rest some nagging injuries. Alternatively, the 43-year-old cruiserweight may focus almost exclusively on tag team matches in order to reduce some of the toll his daredevil style takes on his body. Recently, Liger and **Akira** lost their IWGP junior tag team championship to **Minoru** and **Prince Devitt**, when Devitt pinned Akira to reclaim the belts.

In a surprise appearance, **Abismo Negro** made his return to AAA at a televised show from Arena Solidaridad. He joined forces with **Los Hell Brothers**.

Earlier this year, the city of Iwata in northern Japan was rocked by a damaging earthquake. All Japan Wrestling has gotten involved in the relief efforts, donating proceeds from its Summer Action Series to assist the cause. The climax of the series saw former arch-rivals **Suwama** and **Osamu Nishimura** team up to take on **Minoru Suzuki** and **Taiyo Kea** in an unsuccessful bid for the All Japan tag team championship. All Japan has been heavily promoting Triple Crown titlist Suwama as one of the few wrestlers in the world capable of simultaneously holding both the top singles and tag team championship in the promotion.

Former WWE wrestler **Chris Masters** is headed to Mexico to wrestle in AAA. His likely role will be similar to his "Masterpiece" persona in WWE. He'll be an arrogant heel who uses his size (standing a legitimate 6'5", Masters towers over all of AAA's top technico stars) and strength to bully his opponents. Masters has worked sparsely since being released from WWE for repeated Wellness Policies violations, wrestling briefly in Japan for **Antonio Inoki**'s IGF under the name **Chris Moore** and then working some U.S. independent shows, including appearing in **Harley Race**'s World League Wrestling promotion.

The British-based Real Quality Wrestling promotion has opened a wrestling training school under the direction of RQW women's champion **Sweet Saraya**, with head trainer **Tony Scarlo** supervising the sessions.

Saraya captured the RQW and WSA Austrian women's championship titles in Vienna, Austria, by defeating **Wesna** in an outdoor match in which Mother Nature made things very difficult on the women in the ring. A torrential thunderstorm pelted the combatants and made the canvas slippery. Heavy winds made it difficult to navigate the ring, as discarded cups and paper swirled in the air. As spectators scurried to find cover, several folding chairs blew into the ring.

To make matters worse, ringside officials were concerned that, with lightning flashing in the sky and thunder claps growing louder, the metal ringposts could get struck. It was suggested the match be halted or postponed. Both Saraya and Wesna vehemently refused, so the match continued to its conclusion.

For all of the negative publicity that wrestling gets, stories of the positive things the wrestling community does—both internationally and within the USA—also deserve some attention. Recently, there was a touching story in Luchaworld.com detailing a visit to a Mexican children's hospital by lucha libre star **Dr. Wagner Jr.**

Wagner arranged to spend several hours of his time with the seriously ill children, some of whom cried tears of joy and threw their arms tightly around him as he stopped by their beds. Wagner imposed no time limit, posing for every picture parents wanted to take, answering every last question from the kids, signing countless autographs, and helping the doctors make the administration of medications feel a little less torturous by holding childrens' hands.

Wagner went above and beyond the call of duty, but he's hardly the only wrestler who does these sorts of deeds whenever scheduling permits it. Wrestlers like Wagner are well aware that their own bodies are their livelihood, which is why it's easy for them to feel such compassion for children whose bodies and health have failed them. □

Photo by Koichi Yoshizawa

Some of Japan's biggest stars, including the highly touted Triple Crown champ Suwama, recently joined forces to raise money following an earthquake in Iwata, Japan. The highlight of this fundraiser, the Summer Action Series, saw Suwama team with rival Osamu Nishimura for the AJPW tag championship.

arena reports

We encourage promoters and readers to e-mail results to:

PWIResults@yahoo.com

Please try to utilize the exact format you see in the "Arena Reports." Also, please distinguish between handicap matches and three- or four-way matches. And, when reporting the result of a handicap match, indicate the number of competitors and who was the last man eliminated. Finally, please note pinfall finishes. Following these guidelines will help us greatly and make it more likely that your report will be used.

Spotlight Card of the Month

NEW YORK

UNIONDALE—WWE Great American Bash 2008 at the Nassau Coliseum: **Curt Hawkins** & **Zack Ryder** defeated **John Morrison** & **The Miz**, **Jesse** & **Festus**, and **Finlay** & **Hornswoggle** in a four-way tag team match to win Morrison & Miz' WWE tag team title ... **Shelton Benjamin** defeated **Matt Hardy** for the U.S. championship ... ECW champion **Mark Henry** defeated **Tommy Dreamer** ... **Chris Jericho** defeated **Shawn Michaels** ... **Michelle McCool** defeated **Natalya** to become the first WWE Divas champion ... World champion **C.M. Punk** vs. **Batista** ended in double-DQ ... **John Bradshaw Layfield** defeated **John Cena** in a New York City parking lot brawl ... WWE heavyweight champion **Triple-H** defeated **Edge**.
(07-20-08)

—"Spotlight" photos by George Napolitano

UNITED STATES

CALIFORNIA

LOS ANGELES—Empire Wrestling Federation at the Covina Knights of Columbus: **Ryan Taylor** defeated **Rockstar Cordova** ... American champion **Vizzion** defeated **Black** ... Tag team champions **Famous For Fearless** defeated **The High Rollers** ... Cruiserweight champion **Blackstar** defeated **Maximo** ... **Ari Romero Sr.** & **Ari Romero Jr.** defeated Maximo & **Espiritu Infernal** ... Heavyweight champion **Scorpio Sky** defeated **Joey Ryan** and **Terex** in a three-way ... **Mikey Nicholls** defeated **Brandon Gatson** in a last-man-standing match.
(07-25-08)

—Mike Lano

SAN JOSE—WWE Smackdown at the HP Pavilion Center: **Matt Hardy** defeated **Bam Neely** ... **Michelle McCool** defeated **Layla El** ... **Vladimir Kozlov** defeated **Jamie Noble** ... **Kane** defeated **Montel Vontavious Porter** ... **The Great Khali** defeated **Charles Robinson** by submission in a punishment match ... **Jesse** & **Festus** defeated **Deuce** & **Domino** ... **Finlay** defeated **The Miz** ... **Chavo Guerrero Jr.** defeated **Batista**.
(06-20-08)

—Doug LaRue

FRESNO—WWE Smackdown at Fresno State University: **John Morrison** defeated **Finlay** ... **Mark Henry** defeated **Tommy Dreamer** ... **Cherry** defeated **Maryse Ouellet** ... **MVP** defeated **C.M. Punk** ... U. S. champion **Matt Hardy** defeated **Chuck Palumbo** ... **Jesse** & **Festus** defeated **Deuce** & **Domino** ... **Batista** defeated **The Great Khali**.
(06-13-08)

—John Diaz

FRESNO—ECW at the Save Mart Center: **Evan Bourne** & **Kofi Kingston** defeated **Shelton Benjamin** & **Mike Knox** ... **Victoria** defeated **Kelly Kelly** ... **Finlay** defeated **Armando Estrada** ... **Hornswoggle** defeated Armando Estrada ... WWE tag team champions **The Miz** & **John Morrison** defeated **Kane** & **C.M. Punk**.
(06-10-08)

—John Diaz

OAKLAND—WWE Raw at the Oracle Arena: **Ken Kennedy** defeated **Paul Birchall** ... Women's champion **Mickie James** defeated **Beth Phoenix** ... **John Cena** defeated **John Bradshaw Layfield** ... **Umaga** & **Snitsky** defeated **Hardcore Holly** & **Cody Rhodes** ... **Cryme Tyme (Shad Gaspard** & **JTG)** defeated **Santino Marella** & **Carlito Cool**.
(06-09-08)

—Matt Kronmiller

STOCKTON—WWE Raw at the Stockton Arena: **Hardcore Holly** & **Cody Rhodes** defeated **Carlito** & **Santino** ... **Ted DiBiase Jr.** defeated **Jim Duggan** ... **Brian Kendrick** defeated **Snitsky** ... **Paul Birchall** & **Katie Lea** defeated **Super Crazy** in a handicap match ... **Lance Cade** defeated **Trevor Murdoch** ... Intercontinental champion **Chris Jericho** defeated **Jeff Hardy** ... Women's champion **Mickie James** defeated **Beth Phoenix** ... **John Cena** defeated **John Bradshaw Layfield** ... **Triple-H** defeated **Umaga**.
(06-08-08)

—Anthony Smith

After years of teasing the fans with glimpses of brilliant ability, Shelton Benjamin finally got a taste of singles glory when he defeated Matt Hardy to win the U.S. championship. The new champion's excitement could be felt throughout the Nassau Coliseum.

CONNECTICUT

UNCANSVILLE—WWE Raw at the Mohegan Sun Arena: **Lance Cade** defeated **Paul London** ... **Beth Phoenix** defeated **Kelly Kelly** ... **John Cena** & **Cryme Tyme** (**Shad Gaspard** & **JTG**) defeated **John Bradshaw Layfield**, **Cody Rhodes**, & **Ted DiBiase Jr.** ... **Paul Birchall** & **Katie Lea** defeated **Kofi Kingston** & **Mickie James** ... **D-Lo Brown** defeated **Santino Marella** ... World champion **C.M. Punk** defeated **Batista** by DQ.
(07-24-08)

—Paul Reeves

FLORIDA

ORLANDO—TNA *Impact* at Universal Studios: **Beer Money Inc. (Robert Roode & James Storm)** defeated **Christian Cage & Rhino** ... **Jay Lethal Curry Man**, & **Shark Boy** defeated **The Rock 'n' Rave Infection (Lance Rock & Jimmy Rave)** & **Johnny Devine** ... **Consequences Creed** defeated X division champion **Petey Williams** in a non-title match ... **Matt Morgan** defeated **Sal Rinauro** ... **Gail Kim** & **Taylor Wilde** defeated **The Beautiful People (Angelina Love & Velvet Sky)**.
(07-31-08)

—Allen Davis

ORLANDO—TNA *Impact* at Universal Studios: **Consequences Creed** defeated **Jimmy Rave**, **Johnny Devine**, and **Eric Young** in a X division four-way ... **Matt Morgan** defeated **Kory Chavis** ... **Beer Money Inc. (Robert Roode & James Storm)** defeated **The Motor City Machine Guns (Alex Shelley & Chris Sabin)** ... Knockouts champion **Taylor Wilde** defeated **Velvet Sky** in three consecutive matches ... **Kurt Angle** & **Team 3-D (Brother Ray & Brother Devon)** defeated **Christian Cage**, **Rhino**, & **A.J. Styles**.
(07-24-08)

—Allen Davis

ORLANDO—TNA *Impact* at Universal Studios: X division champion **Petey Williams** defeated **Kaz** ... **Matt Morgan** defeated **Jimmy Rave** ... Matt Morgan defeated **Lance Rock** ... **Velvet Sky** defeated **Gail Kim**, **Jackie Moore**, **Angelina Love**, **Salinas**, **Roxxi Laveaux**, **Rhaka Khan**, **Traci Brooks**, **Christy Hemme**, and **ODB** in a Knockouts gauntlet number-one contender match ... **Sonjay Dutt** defeated **Eric Young** and **Johnny Devine** in a three-way ... **Booker T** defeated **Consequences Creed**.
(07-17-08)

—Allen Davis

ORLANDO—TNA *Impact* at Universal Studios: **Homicide** vs. **Robert Roode** ended in a no-contest ... **Doug Williams** defeated **Masato Yoshino** ... **Petey Williams**, **Tomko**, & **Kip James** defeated **B.G. James**, **Eric Young**, & **Matt Morgan** ... **Taylor Wilde** defeated **Awesome Kong** to win the Knockouts title ... **Kaz** defeated **Ultimo Guerrero** ... **A.J. Styles**, **Gail Kim**, & **ODB** defeated **Kurt Angle** & **The Beautiful People (Angelina Love & Velvet Sky)**.
(07-10-08)

—Allen Davis

ORLANDO—TNA *Impact* at Universal Studios: **The Motor City Machine Guns (Chris Sabin & Alex Shelley)** defeated **Beer Money Inc. (Robert Roode & James Storm)** ... **Moose** defeated **Roxxi Laveaux** ... **Rey Bucanero** defeated **Alex Koslov** ... **Taylor Wilde** defeated **Raesha Saed** ... **Samoa Joe** & **Kevin Nash** defeated **Beer Money Inc. (Robert Roode & James Storm)**.
(07-03-08)

—Allen Davis

Michelle McCool weathered a brutal offensive onslaught by Natalya to become the first-ever WWE Divas champion. The "Sexiest Woman On Television" went a long way toward legitimizing her career when she reversed a sharpshooter attempt and forced Natalya to tap out.

ORLANDO—TNA *Impact* at Universal Studios: **A.J. Styles** defeated **Consequences Creed** ... **Christian Cage** defeated **Brother Ray** ... **Awesome Kong** defeated **Danielle** ... **Team Mexico (Ultimo Guerrero & Ray Bucanero)** defeated **Team Japan (Masato Yoshino & Naruki Doi)** ... **Moose** defeated **ODB** ... **Booker T** defeated **Kevin Nash**.
(06-26-08)

—Allen Davis

ORLANDO—TNA *Impact* at Universal Studios: **Team TNA (Alex Shelley & Chris Sabin)** defeated **Team International (Shawn Daivari & Tyson Dux)** ... **Awesome Kong** defeated **Taylor Wilde** ... **Kaz** defeated **Alex Koslov** ... **Jackie Moore** defeated **Salinas** ... **Christian Cage** & **A.J. Styles** defeated **Team 3-D (Brother Ray & Brother Devon)**.
(06-19-08)

—Allen Davis

ORLANDO—TNA *Impact* at Universal Studios: World champion **Samoa Joe** defeated **Kaz** ... **Team TNA (Chris Sabin & Alex Shelley)** defeated **Team Japan (Masato Yoshino & Naruki Doi)** ... Tag team champions **LAX (Homicide & Hernandez)** defeated **Beer Money Inc. (Robert Roode & James Storm)** ... **Gail Kim** defeated **Velvet Sky** ... **Alex Koslov** defeated **Curry Man** ... **Sonjay Dutt** defeated **Consequences Creed** ... **Kurt Angle** defeated **A.J. Styles**.
(06-12-08)

—Allen Davis

IDAHO

BOISE—WWE Raw at the Taco Bell Arena: **Hardcore Holly** & **Cody Rhodes** defeated **Cryme Tyme** (**Shad Gaspard** & **JTG**) and **Paul London** & **Brian Kendrick** in a three-way ... **Ted DiBiase Jr.** defeated **Jim Duggan** ... **Trevor Murdoch** defeated **Charlie Haas** ... **Super Crazy** defeated **Santino Marella** ... **Jeff Hardy** defeated **Lance Cade** ... Women's champion **Mickie James** defeated **Beth Phoenix** ... **Shawn Michaels** defeated **Snitsky** ... **John Cena** defeated **Umaga**.
(06-14-08)

—Diego Rodriguez

ILLINOIS

CHICAGO—Ring of Honor at the Frontier Field House: **Trik Davis** defeated **Shane Hollister** ... **Rhett Titus** & **Delirious** defeated **Alex Payne** & **Silas Young** ... **Erick Stevens** defeated **Jay Briscoe** ...

PWI TURNS 25!

PRO Wrestling ILLUSTRATED

Pro Wrestling Illustrated recently celebrated its 25th year as the sport's number-one publication in a very special way. Those who subscribe to *PWI* or spotted it at the newsstand in time got a treat. Not only did PWI produce a silver anniversary special, but as an added bonus, we polybagged a re-print of our very first issue, from 1979!

If you missed it, you won't have to wait 25 more years for a follow-up. A limited amount of both issues are still available!

Send in the order form below—
before it really is too late!

☐ Please send me *PWI's* 25th Anniversary edition only. I am enclosing a check or money order for $7 (plus $2 postage and handling) as payment.

☐ Please send me the replica premiere edition of *PWI* only. I am enclosing a check or money order for $7 (plus $2 postage and handling) as payment.

GO FOR BOTH & SAVE!

☐ YES, I'll take both the *PWI* 25th Anniversary issue and the replica premiere edition to save more than three bucks. I've enclosed a check or money order for $10.95 (plus $2 postage and handling).

Please send check or money order only to:
Sports & Entertainment Publications LLC
P.O. Box 910
Ft. Washington, PA 19034

Print your name and address clearly

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

For Canadian and Mexican orders, add $1 per issue (airmail). For all other countries, add $5.50 for postage and handling (airmail). International money order in U.S. funds only. Please allow 6 to 8 weeks for delivery.

7035/09-07

In what is arguably the gutsiest performance of his career, Shawn Michaels battled through a hideous eye injury until the referee had no choice but to stop the match and award it to Chris Jericho. Y2J claims that HBK's career is over. We'll wait for the official word from Shawn himself especially after the events at SummerSlam.

Chris Hero defeated **Pelle Primeau** ... **The Age of the Fall (Necro Butcher** & **Tyler Black)** defeated **Kevin Steen** & **El Generico** ... **Claudio Castagnoli** defeated **Bryan Danielson** ... **Sara Del Rey** defeated **Daizee Haze** and SHIMMER champion **MsChif** in a non-title three-way ... **Brent Albright** & **Roderick Strong** defeated **Sweet** & **Sour Inc. (Adam Pearce** & **Go Shiozaki)** ... Heavyweight champion **Nigel McGuinness** defeated **Jerry Lynn** ...**Austin Aries** defeated **Jimmy Jacobs**.
(06-28-08)

—Tyler Anderson

LOUISIANNA

BATON ROUGE—WWE Smackdown at the Baton Rouge River Center Arena: **Shelton Benjamin** defeated U.S. champion **Matt Hardy** in a non-title match ... **Ken Kennedy** defeated **Domino** ... **Finlay** & **Hornswoggle** defeated WWE tag team champions **John Morrison** & **The Miz** in a non-title match ... WWE champion **Triple-H** defeated **Chavo Guerrero Jr.** ... **Jesse** & **Festus** defeated **Curt Hawkins** & **Zack Ryder** ... **Vladimir Kozlov** defeated **Stevie Richards** ... **Edge** vs. **The Big Show** ended in a no-contest.
(07-11-08)

—Mike LoRe

BATON ROUGE—ECW at the Baton Rouge River Center Arena: **Finlay** defeated **The Miz** ... **Braden Walker** defeated **Armando Estrada** ... **Evan Bourne** defeated **Nunzio** ... The non-title match between heavyweight champion **Mark Henry** and **Tommy Dreamer** ended in a no-contest.
(07-08-08)

—Harry Burkett

NEW ORLEANS—WWE Raw at the New Orleans Arena: **Rey Mysterio Jr.** defeated **Santino Marella** ... **Kelly Kelly** & **Mickie James** defeated **Jillian Hall** & **Layla El** ... World champion **C.M. Punk** defeated **Snitsky** in a non-title match ... Intercontinental champion **Kofi Kingston** defeated **Charlie Haas** in a non-title match ... **Batista** defeated **John Cena**, **John Bradshaw Layfield**, and **Kane** in a four-way.
(07-07-08)

—Brian Anderson

MICHIGAN

DETROIT—Ring of Honor at the Michigan State Fairgrounds: **The Briscoe Brothers** defeated **Mitch Franklin** & **Silas Young** ... **Erick Stevens** defeated **Ruckus**, **Delirious**, and **Shane Hagadorn** in a four-corner survival match... **Kevin Steen** defeated **Necro Butcher** ... Heavyweight champion **Nigel McGuinness** defeated **Claudio Castagnoli** ... Silas Young defeated **Kenny Omega** ... **Roderick Strong** & **Naomichi Marufuji** defeated **Sweet** & **Sour Inc. (Chris Hero** & **Go Shiozaki)** ... **Bryan Danielson**

defeated **Tyler Black** ... Ruckus won the Honor Rumble.
(07-26-08)

—Nikki Viotti

NEW JERSEY

TRENTON—TNA Hard Justice at the Sovereign Bank Arena: X division champion **Petey Williams** defeated **Consequences Creed** ... **Taylor Wilde**, **ODB**, & **Gail Kim** defeated **Awesome Kong** & **The Beautiful People (Angelina Love** & **Velvet Sky)** when Wilde pinned Love ... **Beer Money Inc. (Robert Roode** & **James Storm)** beat **LAX (Homicide** & **Hernandez)** to win the World tag team title ... **Jay Lethal** pinned **Sonjay Dutt** in a tuxedo, chain match ... **Christian Cage** & **Rhino** beat **Team 3-D (Brother Ray** & **Brother Devon)** in a Jersey streetfight ... **A.J. Styles** defeated **Kurt Angle** in a last-man-standing match ... World champion **Samoa Joe** defeated **Booker T** in a six sides of steel match.
(08-10-08)

—Stu Saks

NORTH CAROLINA

CHARLOTTE—WWE Smackdown at the Time Warner Cable Arena: **Curt Hawkins** & **Zack Ryder** defeated **Finlay** & **Hornswoggle** ... The handicap match pitting **The Big Show** against **The Great Khali**, **Montel Vontavious Porter**, **Shelton Benjamin**, & **Vladimir Kozlov** ended in a no-contest ... **Natalya** defeated **Cherry** ... **Vickie Guerrero** defeated **Cherry** ... **Umaga** defeated **Ken Kennedy** ... **Brian Kendrick** defeated **Jimmy Wang Yang** ... WWE tag team champions **John Morrison** & **The Miz** defeated **Jesse** & **Festus** ... **Matt Hardy** vs. **Jeff Hardy** ended in a no-contest.
(07-18-08)

—Matt Kattler

ASHEVILLE—WWE Smackdown at the Civic Center: **Finlay** defeated **Carlito** ... **The Great Khali** defeated **Evan Bourne** ... **Ken Kennedy** defeated **Mike Knox** ... WWE tag team champions **The Miz** & **John Morrison** defeated **Jesse** & **Festus** ... U.S. champion **Matt Hardy** defeated **Shelton Benjamin** and **Montel Vontavious Porter** in a triple-threat match ... **Michelle McCool** & **Cherry** beat **Victoria** & **Maryse Ouellet**... ECW heavyweight champion **Mark Henry** defeated **Tommy Dreamer** ... **Jeff Hardy** defeated **Edge**.
(07-14-08)

—Jason Surrett

RALEIGH—WWE Raw at the RBC Center: Women's champion **Mickie James** defeated **Katie Lea** ... Intercontinental champion **Kofi Kingston** defeated **Paul Burchall** ... **Beth Phoenix** defeated **Santino Marella** ... World champion **C.M. Punk** defeated **Kane** in a non-title match ... **Chris Jericho** defeated **Paul London** ... **John Cena** & **Cryme Tyme (JTG** & **Shad Gaspard)** defeated **John Bradshaw Layfield**, **Cody Rhodes**, & **Ted DiBiase Jr.** by DQ.
(07-14-08)

—Craig Brown

BELMONT—Southern Heritage Championship Wrestling at the Belmont National Guard Armory: **Mike Lee** defeated Shawn Van Halen ... **Justin Feeche** defeated **Rob Killjoy** ... **Raymond Helms** & **Shawn Van Halen** defeated **Mike Lee** & **Marcellus King** ... **Jason Jones** defeated **Buff Bagwell** ... **Barbarian** vs. **Jimmy Jack Funk Jr.** ended in a no-contest ... **Buzz** defeated **Randy Wayne** ... **Ivan Koloff** defeated **George South Sr.** in a Russian chain match to win the EWA heavyweight championship.
(07-10-08)

—Frank Krewda

OHIO

DAYTON—Ring of Honor Battle for Supremacy at Montgomery County Fairgrounds: **Tyler Black** defeated **Delirious** ... **Claudio Castagnoli** defeated **Jay Briscoe** and **Brent Albright** in a triple-threat match ... **Erick Stevens** defeated **Bryan Danielson** ... **Necro Butcher** defeated **Austin Aries** ... **Kevin Steen** & **El Generico** defeated **The Age of the Fall (Jimmy Jacobs** & **Joey Matthews)** ... **Chris Hero** defeated **Roderick Strong** ... NWA champion **Adam Pearce** defeated ROH champion **Nigel McGuinness** by DQ.
(06-27-08)

—Ryan Charles

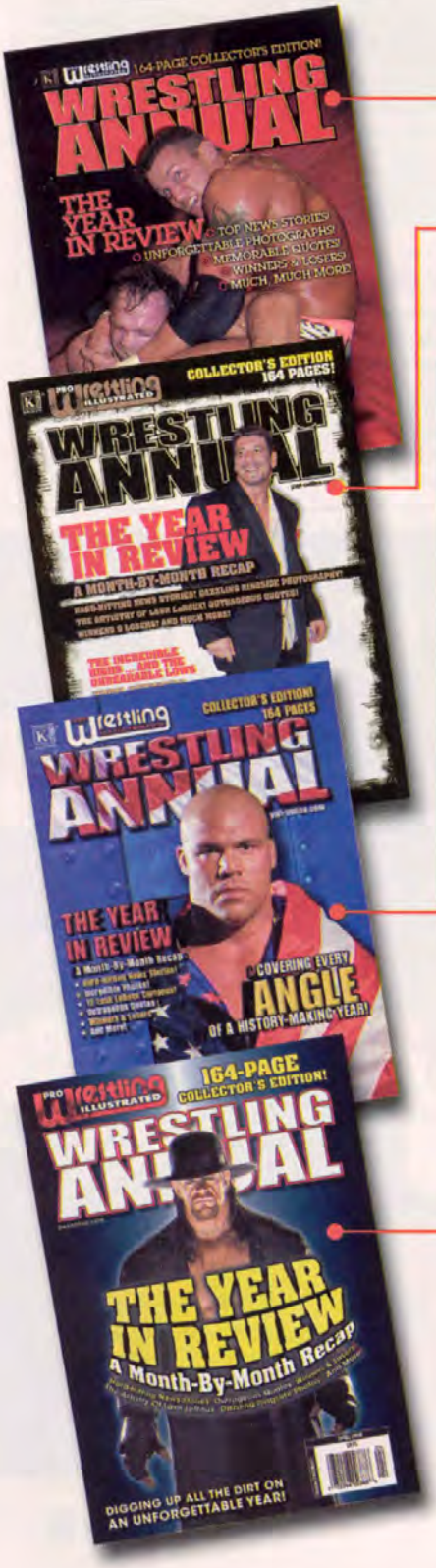
OKLAHOMA

OKLAHOMA CITY—Mid-South Wrestling Association at the Golden Goose Flea Market: **Crisstopher Crow** vs. **Sage** ended in a no-contest ... **Kevin Morgan** defeated **Shawn Sanders** ... **Thomas Trump** defeated **Jeff Knight** and **Chaz Sharpe** in a triple-threat match ... Oklahoma champion **Bad Boy** defeated **Outlaw** ... Mid-South champion **Al**

PRO WRESTLING ILLUSTRATED PRESENTS

THE MOST AWESOME WRESTLING MAGAZINES

The largest, most colorful magazine specials we've ever published are now being offered at unbelievable savings! Order the four-issue SuperSet and receive a discount of **more than 30% off the original newsstand price!**



>>WRESTLING ANNUAL (2004)
2004 will be remembered as a transitional year for pro wrestling, in more ways than one! Month-by-month details. 164 pages! Amazing photos! This year's caricatures by Lash LeRoux!

>>WRESTLING ANNUAL (2005)
A spectacular look back at the tumultuous year that was 2005. 164 pages of insightful analysis, electrifying photos, and those amazing Lash LeRoux caricatures!

>>WRESTLING ANNUAL (2006)
A look back at the year whose events may prove to change the course of wrestling history. 164 pages featuring spectacular photos and, of course, the artistry of Lash LeRoux.

>>WRESTLING ANNUAL (2007)
The year in review, memorable quotes, winners & losers, great photos, and more Lash toons! 164 pages

☑ **I'VE GOTTA HAVE THEM!** Please send me the **PRO WRESTLING ILLUSTRATED PRESENTS** specials I've indicated below. I am enclosing $9.95 per copy (plus $2 postage and handling) as payment in full for each issue. OR et me save more than 30% by ordering the SuperSet of all four for $28.00 (plus $4 postage and handling).

☐ **2004 WRESTLING ANNUAL—Spring 2005**
($9.95 plus $2 for postage and handling)

☐ **2005 WRESTLING ANNUAL—April 2006**
($9.95 plus $2 for postage and handling)

☐ **2006 WRESTLING ANNUAL—April 2007**
($9.95 plus $2 for postage and handling)

☐ **2007 WRESTLING ANNUAL—April 2008**
($9.95 plus $2 for postage and handling)

☐ **SUPERSET—All Four!**
($28.00 plus $4 for postage and handling)

For Canadian and Mexican orders, the postage and handling charge is $3 per issue (airmail) or $9 for the SuperSet (airmail). For all other countries, the postage and handling charge is $7.50 per issue (airmail) or $11 for the SuperSet (airmail). Int'l money order in U.S. funds only. Please allow 6-8 weeks for delivery.

Please indicate method of payment:

☐ Check or money order (enclosed and payable to Sports & Entertainment Publications LLC)

☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard #_____

Expiration Date: _____ (MO/YR) ___ ___ ___ (3 DIGIT SECURITY CODE)

Signature:_____

Send to: **Sports & Entertainment Publications LLC, P.O. Box 910, Ft. Washington, PA 19034**
Print your name and address clearly

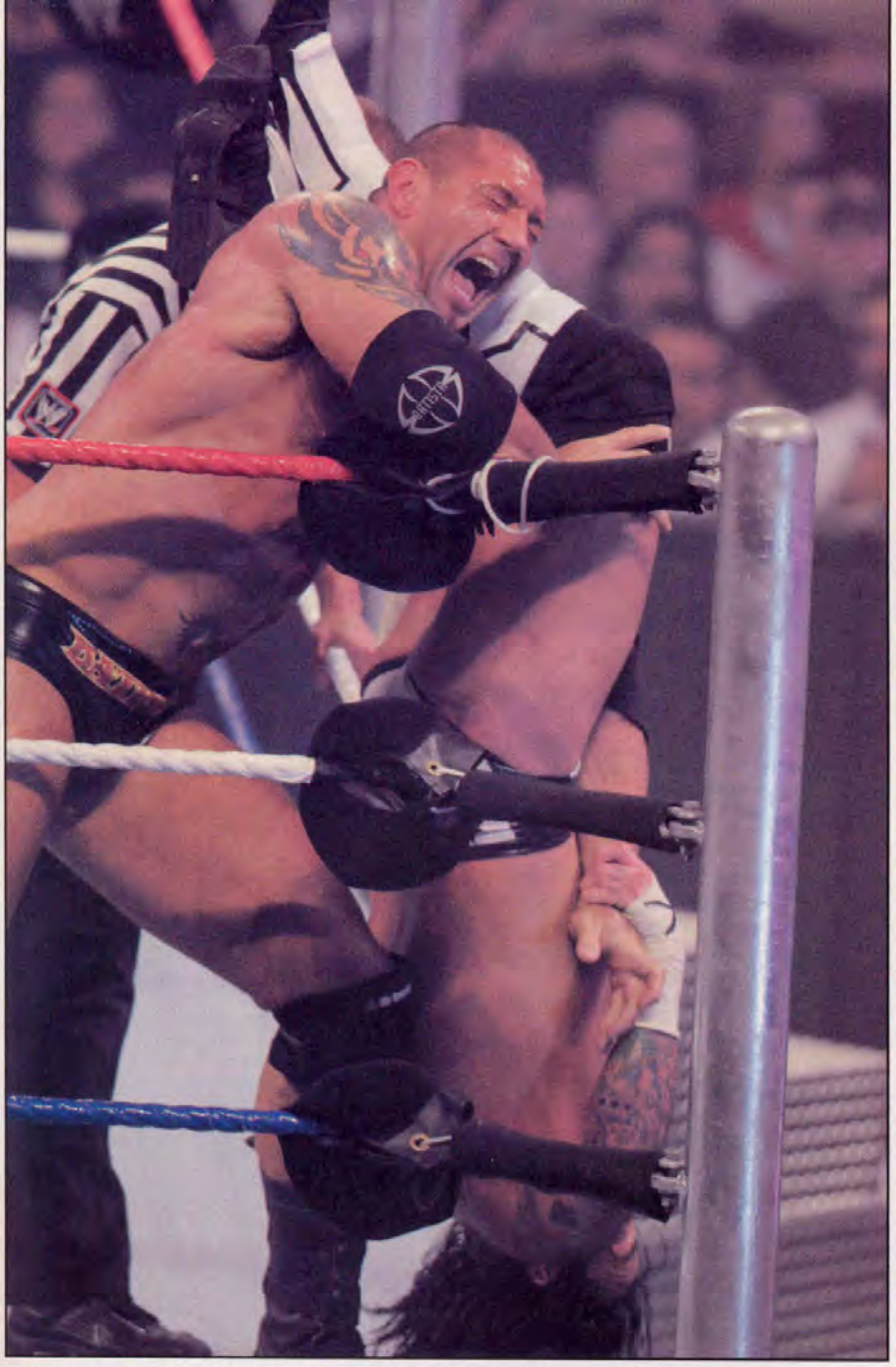
NAME_____

ADDRESS_____ CITY_____

STATE_____ ZIP_____ Email_____

For Canadian and Mexican orders, the postage and handling charge is $3 per issue (airmail) or $9 for the SuperSet (airmail). For all other countries, the postage and handling charge is $7.50 per issue (airmail) or $11 for the SuperSet (airmail). Int'l money order in U.S. funds only. Please allow 6-8 weeks for delivery.

7807/06.08



Batista seemed well on his way to capturing the World title from C.M. Punk before Kane made his presence felt, attacking both combatants. It was an unsatisfying conclusion to what had been a tremendous struggle.

Farat defeated **Ky-Ote Joe** ... **Brock Landers** defeated **Maniacal Mike** ... **The Forsaken (Michael Faith** & **Halo)** defeated **Limited Edition (Dane Griffin** & **Les Mayne)** to win the Mid-South tag team championship.
(07-20-08)

—Theodore Williams

TULSA—WWE Smackdown at the Tulsa Convention Center: **Michelle McCool** defeated **Kelly Kelly**, **Victoria**, **Cherry**, and **Maryse Ouellet** in a four-way ... **Jesse** & **Festus** defeated **Zack Ryder** & **Curt Hawkins** ... **Jeff Hardy** defeated **John Morrison** ... **Umaga** defeated **Sho Funaki** ... U.S. champion **Matt Hardy** defeated **Ken Kennedy**, **Chavo Guerrero Jr.**, and **Shelton Benjamin** in a fatal four-way.
(07-04-08)

—Tex Richard

OKLAHOMA CITY—WWE Raw at the Ford Center: **C.M. Punk** defeated **Edge** to win the World title ... Women's champion **Mickie James** defeated **Jillian Hall** in a non-title match ... World tag team champions **Cody Rhodes** & **Ted DiBiase Jr.** defeated **Darren Wade** & **Steve Anthony** in a non-title match ... Intercontinental champion **Kofi Kingston** defeated **Chris Jericho** by DQ ... World champion C.M. Punk defeated **John Bradshaw Layfield**.
(06-30-08)

—Matt Dilley

PENNSYLVANIA

PHILADELPHIA—WWE Smackdown/ECW at the First Union Center: **Tommy Dreamer** defeated **Colin Delaney** ... **Evan Bourne** defeated **James Curtis** ... **Matt Hardy** defeated **Finlay**, **John Morrison**, and **The Miz** in a four-way number-one contenders match ... U.S. champion **Shelton Benjamin** defeated **Jimmy Wang Yang** ... **Festus** defeated **Curt Hawkins** ... **Vladimir Kozlov** defeated **Stevie Richards** ... **The Great Khali** won a six-man number-one contenders battle royal ... Divas champion **Michelle McCool** defeated **Maryse Ouellet** ... **Brian Kendrick** defeated **Shannon Moore** ... WWE champion **Triple-H** defeated **Edge**.
(07-22-08)

—Gardner Semmelmann

SOUTH CAROLINA

BLUFFTON—CWA at Bluffton High School Football Stadium: **Josh Magnum** defeated **Hexxon** ... **Team Ego** defeated **Team Macktion** ... **Timber** defeated **Sixx** ...TV champion **Lodi** defeated **Gluteus Maximus** ... Tag team champions **Nu Skool** defeated **Perfect Violence** ... **Sick Boy** & **Scotty Riggs** defeated **Disco Inferno** & **Jean-Pierre Flex**.
(07-19-08)

—Brett Wolverton

CHESTER—APW at the APW Arena: **Lumpy Dudley** defeated **Matt Burnz** ... **Big Country** defeated **Steven Vaughn** & **Dylan Dollar** in a handicap match ... **Big Game James** defeated **Blaze** ... Tag team champions **The Supertroopers** defeated **Caleb Konley** & **Sweet Dreams** ... **Thorn** defeated **Hardcore Hunter** ... U.S. champion **Mickie Richards** defeated **Dr. Myers** ... **The Wildboiz** defeated **Baja** & **Heath Havok** ... Heavyweight champion **B.J. Hancock** defeated **Abel Adams**.
(07-18-08)

—Brett Wolverton

WELLFORD—Supercade Wrestling at the National Guard Armory: **Dylan Dollar** defeated **Steven Vaughn** ... **Squeaks Da Clown** defeated heavyweight champion **Adam Jaxon** by DQ ... **Rex Rumble** & **Heath Havok** defeated **Nathan Lee** & **Freight Train** ... Hardcore champion **Matt Burns** defeated **Krypto** and **The Dragon** in a triple-threat match ... **A.J. Frost** defeated **Jamie Lee** and U.S. champion **Kid Chaos** in a triple-threat match to win the title ... **Ken Magnum**, **Bobby Diamond**, & **Adam Jaxon** defeated **Johnny Danger**, **Vinnie Valentine**, & Squeaks Da Clown.
(07-17-08)

—Brett Wolverton

TEXAS

DALLAS—Wreckingball Wrestling at the Mexico Lindo Arena: **Rage** defeated **Jason X** ... **TK** defeated **Plan B** ... **Aftershock** defeated **Nightstalker** ... **Dr. Knuckles** & **Mike Ironheart** defeated **Dallas** & **Zero** ... **Jason Silver** defeated **Skyryder** ... Heavyweight champion **Billy Club** defeated **Gary Jay** ... Tag team champions **Pierre Abernathy** & **Evan Gelistico** defeated **Tommy** & **Billy Bong**.
(07-20-08)

—John Simpson

HOUSTON— TNA Victory Road at the Reliant Arena: **Team TNA (Curry Man**, **Alex Shelley**, & **Chris Sabin)** defeated **Team Japan (Milano Collection A.T.**, **Masato Yoshino**, & **Puma)**, **Team Mexico (Ultimo Guerrero**, **Rey Bucanero**, & **Averno)**, and **Team International (Alex Koslov**, **Doug Williams**, & **Tyson Dux)** in a four-team triple elimination match ... **Gail Kim**

defeated **Angelina Love** ... **Sonjay Dutt** defeated **Jay Lethal** ... World tag team champions **LAX (Homicide** & **Hernandez)** defeated **Beer Money Inc. (James Storm** & **Robert Roode)** in a lumberjack match ... Knockouts champion **Taylor Wilde** defeated **Awesome Kong** ... **Volador Jr.** defeated **Kaz**, **Naruki Doi**, and **Daivari** in a four-way ... **Team 3-D (Brother Ray** & **Brother Devon)** & **Kurt Angle** defeated **Rhino**, **Christian Cage**, & **A.J. Styles** ... World champion **Samoa Joe** vs. **Booker T** ended in a no-contest.
(07-13-08)

—Chris Black

HOUSTON—WWE Smackdown at the Mid-Hudson Civic Center: **The Big Show** & **Kane** defeated **Mark Henry** & **Montel Vontavious Porter** ... **Finlay** & **Hornswoggle** defeated **Zack Ryder** & **Curt Hawkins** ... **Edge** defeated **Matt Hardy** ... **Natalya**, **Victoria**, & **Maryse Ouellet** defeated **Michelle McCool**, **Cherry**, & **Kelly Kelly** ... **Vladimir Kozlov** defeated **Domino** ... **Batista** defeated **Umaga**.
(06-27-08)

—Chris Black

SAN ANTONIO—WWE Raw at the AT&T Center: **Cryme Tyme (Shad Gaspard** & **JTG)** defeated **Deuce** & **Domino** ... **Triple-H** defeated **Mark Henry** ... **Finlay** & **Hornswoggle** defeated **Santino Marella** & **Carlito** ... **Hardcore Holly** & **Cody Rhodes** defeated **Chavo Guerrero Jr.** & **Bam Neely** ... **John Morrison** & **The Miz** defeated **Matt Hardy** & **Jeff Hardy** ... **Victoria** & **Natalya** vs. **Mickie James** & **Melina Perez** ended in a double-DQ ... **John Cena** defeated **Edge** ... **Montel Vontavious Porter** defeated **Tommy Dreamer** ... **John Bradshaw Layfield** defeated **Kofi Kingston** ... **Edge** won a 15-man battle royal.
(06-23-08)

—Charlotte Newell

The New York City parking lot brawl began outside the Nassau Coliseum, but the two wrestlers—and a car—ended up inside the arena. Though the two men appear to be out of it here, JBL would emerge victorious after reversing an FU.

UTAH

SALT LAKE CITY—WWE Raw at the E-Center: **John Cena** defeated **Umaga** in a streetfight ... **Maria Kanellis** defeated **Jillian Hall**, **Eve Torres**, **Layla El**, **Lena Yada**, **Maryse Ouellet**, and **Melina Perez** in a "Summer-Time Beach Bikini Blow-Out" ... **Jeff Hardy** defeated **Carlito** ... World tag team champions **Hardcore Holly** & **Cody Rhodes** defeated **Cryme Tyme (Shad Gaspard** & **JTG)** ... **Paul Birchall** & **Katie Lea** defeated **Ken Kennedy** & **Mickie James** ... **Triple-H** defeated **Chris Jericho**.
(06-16-08)

—John Reynolds

VIRGINIA

MANASSAS—Ring of Honor at Sports Network and Fitness Inc.: **The Briscoe Brothers** defeated **Sweet and Sour Inc. (Adam Pearce** & **Shane Hagadorn)** ...

What a mess! The intensity of the hatred between Edge and WWE champion Triple-H paled in comparison to that which Vickie Guerrero held for Alicia Fox, the wedding planner who was caught on tape kissing her husband. Ultimately, Edge would accidentally spear Vickie and, in his confused state, become the victim of a match-ending Triple-H pedigree.

MISSING ANY PWI DOUBLES?

Limited quantities of *Pro Wrestling Illustrated's* popular 148-page double issues are available by mail order. Act now before they're gone!

March 2005: 2004—The Year In Wrestling. Plus: 2004 In Review, Achievement '05 awards, Unofficial/Official, phantastic photos of 2004, predictions for 2005.

July 2005: Gold Strike! Cena & Batista Change The Face Of Wrestling! Plus: Kevin Nash, Chris Benoit, Heartbreakers, all-time WrestleMania roster, the state of the game.

November 2005: The *PWI* 500. Plus: Batista, RVD, Samoa Joe, Chris Jericho, Muhammad Hassan, dream teams.

January 2006: Special Report: WWE vs. TNA: Let The War Begin! Plus: Bryan Danielson, Dudleys-Matt Hardy-Rhino, Ortons, 2005 Report Cards.

March 2006: 2005—The Year In Wrestling. Plus: 2005 In Review, Achievement 2005 awards, Unofficial/Official awards, phantastic photos of 2005, predictions for 2006.

May 2006: Awesome! Samoa Joe Takes Wrestling Where It's Never Been Before! Plus: Lashley, Angle-Batista, Edge, ROH-CZW, Wrestling Forecaster.

July 2006: WM 22: Magic Mania Moments! Plus: The State of the Game, Abyss & Mitchell, Davey Richards, Christian Cage.

September 2006: The Triple-H Paradox: What He Needs He Cannot Keep. Plus: Mid-year report, Shawn Michaels, Rob Van Dam, Chris Daniels, SummerSlam's top 25 matches, ECW years—1992-2001.

January 2007: Sudden Impact! Can Kurt Angle Do For TNA What Hulk Hogan Did For WCW? Plus: Raw vs. Smackdown vs. TNA vs. ECW, The Big Show, Orton-Masters-Carlito-Nitro, Matches of the Year.

March 2007: 2006—The Year In Wrestling. Plus: 2006 In Review, Achievement 2006 awards, Unofficial/Official awards, phantastic photos of 2006, predictions for 2007.

May 2007: The 2007 *PWI* Poll. Plus: Batista, AMW, C.M. Punk, Bam Bam Bigelow, Flair-Dykstra, Chris Sabin.

July 2007: 'Mania Madness: Exclusive WM 23 Coverage. Plus: The State of the Game, Samoa Joe, wrestling deaths, global wrestling.

September 2007: Orton Pays The Price In The Ring … And Earns The Fans' Respect. Plus: Mid-year report, Edge, MVP, Jay Lethal, Great Khali.

November 2007: *The PWI 500.* Plus: John Cena, TNA, WWE draft, TNA analysis.

December 2007: Triple-H Disses The Champ: "Cena's Disrespect Is A Sign Of Fear." Plus: Kurt & Karen Angle, McMahons-Hornswoggle, Batista-Khali, Raw vs. Smackdown vs. TNA vs. ECW, 90 minutes with Chris Jericho.

February 2008: HBK: "If You Ask Me, I'm Younger Than Randy Orton." Plus: Kurt Angle, Nigel McGuiness, Gail Kim, Royal Rumble at 20, sleaziest sluts & slimeballs.

March 2008: 2007—The Year In Wrestling. Plus: 2007 In Review, Achievement 2007 awards, Unofficial/Official awards, phantastic photos of 2007, predictions for 2008.

June 2008: Special Tribute To Ric Flair: His 25 Greatest Covers Of All-Time. Plus: Y2J-JBL, Christian Cage, NWA, Brock Lesnar, Vickie Guerrero, John Morrison.

August 2008: Was Shawn Wrong? Former World Champions Speak Loudly … And Unanimously! Plus: Angle-Joe, Undertaker, C.M. Punk, Austin Aries, State of the Game.

Please send me the **PWI DOUBLES** I have checked below. I have enclosed a check or money order for $8.95 (plus $2 each for shipping and handling), payable to Sports And Entertainment Publications LLC, for each issue I am ordering.

- ☐ March 2005
- ☐ July 2005
- ☐ November 2005
- ☐ January 2006
- ☐ March 2006
- ☐ May 2006
- ☐ July 2006
- ☐ September 2006
- ☐ January 2007
- ☐ March 2007
- ☐ May 2007
- ☐ July 2007
- ☐ September 2007
- ☐ November 2007
- ☐ December 2007
- ☐ February 2008
- ☐ March 2008
- ☐ June 2008
- ☐ August 2008

SEND TO: Sports & Entertainment Publications LLC, Box 910, Ft. Washington, PA 19034

Please indicate method of payment:

☐ Check or money order ☐ VISA ☐ MasterCard

(enclosed and payable to Sports & Entertainment Publications LLC)

Card #_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

Expiration Date: ___/___ MO/YR

3 Digit Security Code: _ _ _

Signature: _____

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____ APT. _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

For Canadian and Mexican orders, the postage and handling charge is $3 per issue (airmail). For all other countries, the postage and handling charge is $7.50 per issue (airmail). Int'l money order in U.S. funds only. Please allow 6-8 weeks for delivery.

7709

Pelle Primeau defeated **Rex Starling** ... **Delirious** defeated **Rhett Titus** ... **Roderick Strong** defeated **Necro Butcher** ... **Bryan Danielson** & **Austin Aries** vs. **The Motor City Machine Guns (Alex Shelley** & **Chris Sabin)** ended in a 20-minute draw ... **Brent Albright** defeated **Chris Hero** ... Heavyweight champion **Nigel McGuinness** defeated **Ruckus** ... Tag Team champions **The Age of the Falls (Jimmy Jacobs** & **Tyler Black)** defeated **Naomichi Marufuji** & **Go Shiozaki**.
(08-01-08)

—Seth Myers

INTERNATIONAL

AUSTRALIA

MELBOURNE—WWE Smackdown/ECW at Rod Laver Arena: **C.M. Punk** defeated **Chavo Guerrero** ... **Vladimir Kozlov** defeated **Jamie Noble** & **Shannon Moore** in a handicap match ... **Kofi Kingston** defeated **Shelton Benjamin** ... **Michelle McCool** defeated **Victoria** ... **John Morrison** & **The Miz** defeated **Finlay** & **Hornswoggle** ... U.S. champion **Matt Hardy** defeated **Chuck Palumbo** ... **Kane** & **The Undertaker** defeated **Mark Henry** & **Montel Vontavious Porter** ... **The Great Khali** defeated **Sho Funaki** ... **Batista** defeated **Edge** by DQ.
(06-13-08)

—Rich Tate

CANADA

TORONTO, ONTARIO—Ring of Honor at the Ted Reeve Arena: **Chris Hero** defeated **Ruckus** ... **Sara Del Rey** defeated **Jennifer Blake** ... **Erick Stevens** vs. **Go Shiozaki** ended in a 15-minute draw ... **Bryan Danielson** defeated **Claudio Castagnoli** ... **Naomichi Marufuji** defeated **Roderick Strong** ... Heavyweight champion **Nigel McGuinness** defeated **Kevin Steen** ... **The Briscoe Brothers** & **Austin Aries** defeated **The Age of the Fall (Jimmy Jacobs**, **Tyler Black**, & **Necro Butcher)**.
(07-25-08)

—Matt Gunzel

WINNEPEG, MANITOBA—Top Rope Championship Wrestling at the Buhler Recreation Park: **Zack Mercury** defeated **Brian Rich** ... **Oz** defeated **Deranged** ... **Bobby Jay** & **Jon Cutler** defeated **Darren Dalton** & **Rob Stardom** ... **Danny Waldner** defeated **Marius** ... **The Big Sexy Beasts (A.J. Sanchez** & **Kevy Chevy)** defeated **Bobby Sharp** & **Chi Chi Cruz** to win the tag team title ... **Kenny Omega** beat **Danny Duggan** ... Jon Cutler won a 22-man battle royal to win the heavyweight championship.
(07-21-08)

—Matt Byer

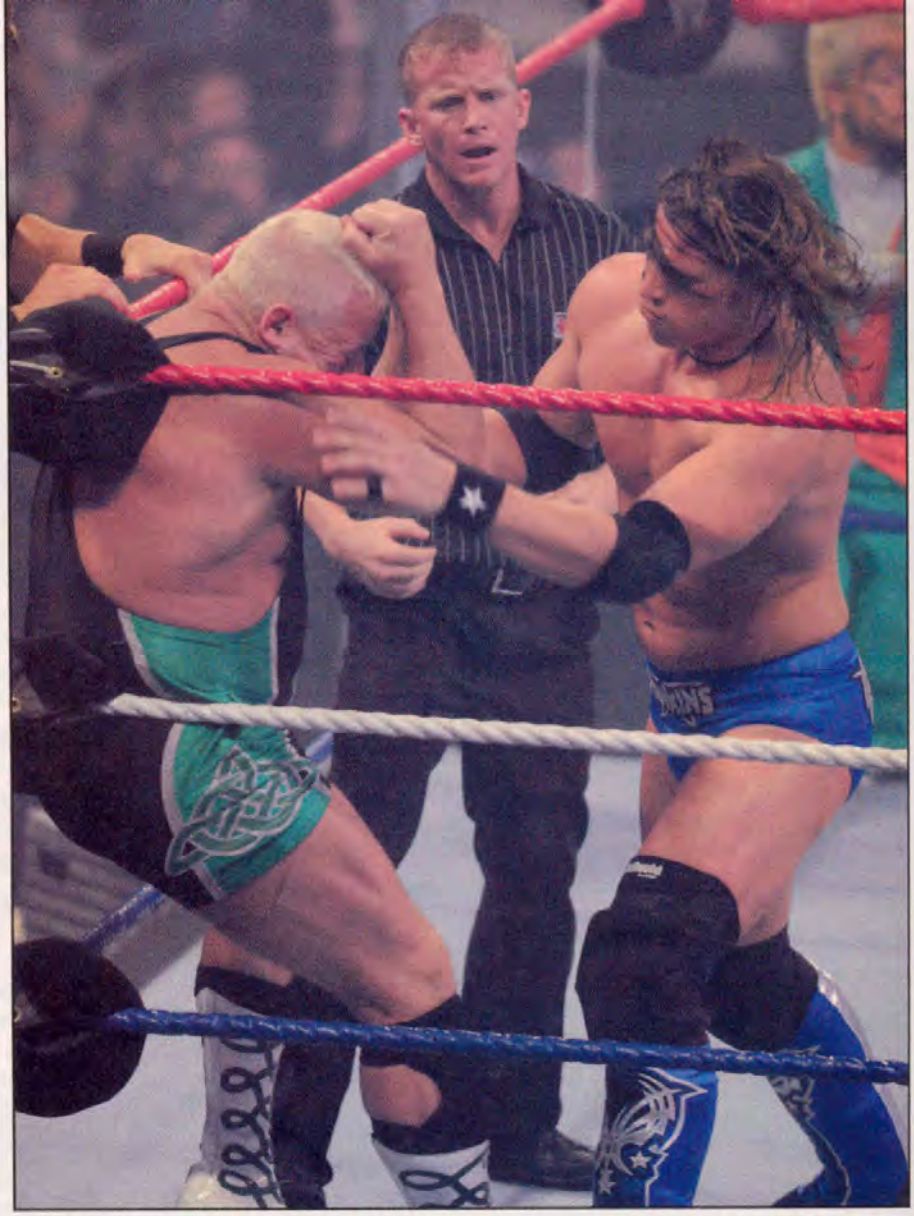
NEW ZEALAND

CHRISTCHURCH—WWE Smackdown/ECW at Westpac Centre: **Kane** defeated **Chavo Guerrero Jr.** ... **Kofi Kingston** defeated **Shelton Benjamin** ... **Vladimir Kozlov** defeated **Jamie Noble** ... **Michelle McCool** defeated **Natalya** ... **The Great Khali** defeated **Sho Funaki** ... **John Morrison** & **The Miz** defeated **Finlay** & **Hornswoggle** ... **C.M. Punk** defeated **Chuck Palumbo** ... **Matt Hardy**, **Batista**, & **The Undertaker** defeated **Mark Henry**, **Edge**, & **Montel Vontavious Porter**.
(06-12-08)

—Matt Watters

AUCKLAND—WWE Smackdown/ECW at the Vector Arena: U.S. champion **Matt Hardy** defeated **Chuck Palumbo** ... **Michelle McCool** defeated **Victoria** ... **C.M. Punk** defeated **Chavo Guerrero Jr.** ... **The Miz** & **John Morrison** defeated **Finlay** & **Hornswoggle** ... **Kofi Kingston** defeated **Shelton Benjamin** ... **The Brothers of Destruction (Undertaker** & **Kane)** defeated **The Great Khali** & **Mark Henry** ... **Vladimir Kozlov** defeated **Shannon Moore** ... **Edge** defeated **Batista**.
(06-11-08)

—Andre'es Garcia



Curt Hawkins moves in on Finlay during the fatal four-way in which he and Zack Ryder captured the WWE tag team championship. John Morrison and The Miz, who were not involved in the final pinfall (Hawkins pinned Festus), had held the belts for eight months.

STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, AND CIRCULATION (All Periodicals Publications Except Requester Publications) (Required by 39 U.S.C. 3685): 1. Publication Title: Pro Wrestling Illustrated ; 2. Publication Number: 1043-7576; 3. Filing Date: 09/30/2008; 4. Issue Frequency: Monthly 5. Number of Issues Published Annually: 12; 6. Annual Subscription Price: $54.20; 7. Complete Mailing Address of Known Office of Publication: 6198 Butler Pike, Suite 200, Blue Bell, PA 19422-2600; 8. Complete Mailing Address of Headquarters or General Business Office of Publisher: 6198 Butler Pike, Suite 200, Blue Bell, PA 19422-2600; 9. Full Names and Complete Mailing Addresses of Publisher, Editor and Managing Editor: Publisher: Stuart M. Saks, 6198 Butler Pike, Suite 200, Blue Bell, PA 19422-2600; Editor: Frank Krewda, 6198 Butler Pike, Suite 200, Blue Bell, PA 19422-2600; Managing Editor: None. 10. Owner: Oscar De La Hoya, Sports & Entertainment Publications, LLC, 6198 Butler Pike, Suite 200, Blue Bell, PA 19422-2600; 11. Known Bondholders, Mortgages, and Other Security Holders Owning or Holding 1 Percent or More of Total Amount of Bonds, Mortgages, or Other Securities: None; 12. N/A; 13. Publication Title: Pro Wrestling Illustrated; 14. Issue Date for Circulation Data: July 2008; 15. Average No. Copies Each Issue During the Preceding 12 Months: a. Total Number of copies (net press run): 96,565; b. Paid Circulation (by mail and outside the mail); (1) Mailed Outside-County Paid Subscriptions Stated on PS Form 3541 (Include paid distribution above nominal rate, advertiser's proof and exchange copies): 2,099; (3) Paid Distribution Outside the Mails Including Sales Through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors, Counter Sales, and Other Paid Distribution Outside USPS®: 22,077; (4) Paid Distribution by Other Classes of Mail Through the USPS (e.g. First Class Mail) R : 87; c. Total Paid Distribution: 24,263; d. Free or Nominal Rate Distribution (By Mail or Outside the Mail); (1) Free or Nominal Rate Outside-County Copies included on PS Form 3541: 28; (4) Free or Nominal Rate Distribution Outside the Mail (Carriers or other means): 211; e. Total Free or Nominal Rate Distribution: 239; f. Total Distribution: 24,502; g. Copies not Distributed: 72,063; h. Total: 96,565; i. Percent Paid: 99.0%; No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to the Filing Date: a. Total Number of Copies (net press run): 87,340; b. Paid Circulation (by mail and outside the mail); (1) Mailed Outside-County Paid Subscriptions Stated on PS Form 3541 (Include paid distribution above nominal rate, advertiser's proof copies, and exchange copies): 1,985; (3) Paid Distribution Outside the Mails Including Sales Through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors, Counter Sales, and Other Paid Distribution Outside USPS®: 21,609; (4) Paid Distribution by Other Classes of Mail Through the USPS (e.g. First Class Mail) R :87; c. Total Paid Distribution: 23,681; d. Free or Nominal Rate Distribution (By Mail and Outside the Mail); (1) Free or Nominal Rate Outside-County Copies included on Form 3541: 28; (4) Free or Nominal Rate Distribution Outside Mail (Carriers or other means): 180; e. Total Free or Nominal Rate Distribution: 208; f. Total Distribution: 23,889; g. Copies not Distributed: 63,451; h. Total: 87,340; i. Percent Paid: 99.1%. I certify that all information furnished on this form is true and complete. I understand that anyone who furnishes false or misleading information on this form or who omits material or information requested on the form may be subjected to criminal sanctions (including fines and imprisonment) and/or civil sanctions (including penalties). Sheila Langmacher, Subscription Services Mgr.

2 MAGAZINES IN 1!
THE WRESTLER/INSIDE WRESTLING

Okay, it was an experiment. We took a gamble. Nobody had ever thought of binding two magazines, back cover to back cover, and selling them as one package. It wouldn't have worked with most magazines, but *The Wrestler* and *Inside Wrestling* have been so closely associated for the last 40 years, we thought it just might work. Well, it did! Reader response has been overwhelmingly positive. So if you missed the combination issues we've published so far, here's a chance to order them.

Vol. 2, 2005: Cover Story—*The Wrestler:* "The Angle Zone: Enter At Your Own Risk!" **60-Minute Interview:** Bob Orton Jr. **Also Inside:** Booker T, Michaels-Christian, A.J. Styles, Ray "Big Bossman" Traylor. **Cover Story—*Inside Wrestling:*** "Edge Of Insanity! Has He Ruined His Future?" **Also Inside:** Scott D'Amore, Paul London, Orlando Jordan, Joey Matthews, Kim Neilson, Kenny Bolin, Dunn & Marcos, Simon Dean, Mana, Kane-Snitsky, Magnus & Daivari, Pat Kenney.

Vol. 3, 2005: Cover Story—*The Wrestler:* "Hogan Steals WrestleMania!" **60-Minute Interview:** Terry Funk. **Also Inside:** Cornette vs. Heenan, Petey Williams, 10 unforgettable WrestleMania moments. **Cover Story—*Inside Wrestling:*** "WrestleMania 21: The *Real* Winners & Losers." **Also Inside:** Alexis Laree, Lance Hoyt, Shane Twins, Jack Evans, Val Venis, Arch Kincaid, Mike Mondo, Alere Littlefeather, Jeff Hammond, O.C. Boyz, Shawn Michaels.

Vol. 5, 2006: Cover Story—*The Wrestler:* "Our Demand To The IOC: Strip Angle Of His Medal!" **60-Minute Interview:** George Steele. **Also Inside:** Randy Orton, Bobby Lashley, Ken Kennedy. **Cover Story—*Inside Wrestling:*** "Christian's TNA Gamble: If He Wins, Everybody Wins." **Also Inside:** Aaron Stevens, Homicide, Boogeyman, Raven-Riley, Talia & April, Rory & Robbie McAlister, Colt Cabana, Mickie James.

Vol. 7, 2006: Cover Story—*The Wrestler:* "Rey Mysterio Jr.: Too Much Man For His Own Good?" **60-Minute Interview:** J.J. Dillon. **Also Inside:** Kane, Styles-Daniels-Joe, Teddy Hart. **Cover Story—*Inside Wrestling:*** "Sting Or Steve: The Makeup On A Man Or … The Make Up Of A Man." **Also Inside:** Brent Albright, Nattie Neidhart, Paul Birchall, Jay Lethal, Bobby Roode, Jimmy Rave, Ruckus, Kid Kash.

Vol. 9, 2006: Cover Story—*The Wrestler:* "'Big Brother' Batista: 'Anybody Who Abused Rey Will Pay!'" **60-Minute Interview:** Harley Race. **Also Inside:** DeGeneration X, Trish-Mickie, Chris Sabin. **Cover Story—*Inside Wrestling:*** Extreme Success: "One Night That Changed The Face Of Wrestling." **Also Inside:** Chris Masters, Eric Young, Alex Shelley, A1, David Young, Sonjay Dutt, The Naturals, Matt Bentley, Elix Skipper, Homicide, Johnny Devine.

Vol. 11, 2007: Cover Story—*The Wrestler:* "Blame Sting! He Could Have Prevented The War With Christian!" **90-Minute Interview:** Bobby Heenan. **Also Inside:** Paul Heyman, Finlay & Regal, Mick Foley. **Cover Story—*Inside Wrestling:*** "Trish Stratus Tribute Cover." **Also Inside:** Lita, Turnbuckle Turkey Awards.

Vol. 13, 2007: Cover Story—*The Wrestler:* "DeGeneration X-Plosion! Brace Yourself For The HHH vs. HBK Feud!" **90-Minute Interview:** Paul Orndorff. **Also Inside:** WSX, Christian-Edge-Rhino, Bobby Lashley. **Cover Story—*Inside Wrestling:*** "WrestleMania Time Capsules—WWE's Biggest Event Through The Years." **Also Inside:** Sting.

Vol. 15, 2007: Cover Story—*The Wrestler:* "WWE Overhaul! Our Plan To Shuffle The Deck." **90-Minute Interview:** Larry Zbyszko. **Also Inside:** McMahon & ECW, Mike Awesome, Colon-Flair. **Cover Story—*Inside Wrestling:*** "What's Up With A.J.? Some Words Of Wisdom From A Man Who Knows." **Also Inside:** Bobby Lashley, stars' greatest covers.

Vol. 17, 2007: Cover Story—*The Wrestler:* "Melina: Too Beautiful To Be Taken Seriously?" 90-Minute Interview: Magnum T.A. **Also Inside:** Introducing/Looking Back. **Cover Story—*Inside Wrestling:*** "The Smackdown Curse—This Is The Title You Don't Want To Win." **Also Inside:** James Storm, Hardys vs. Cade & Murdoch, Memphis Revival, John Cena, baldies.

Vol. 18, 2007: Cover Story—*The Wrestler:* "Legend Killer! The Hidden Truth Behind Randy Orton's Obsession." 90-Minute Interview: Bruno Sammartino. **Also Inside:** Bryan Danielson, Bob Backlund. **Cover Story—*Inside Wrestling:*** "The Benoit Tragedy: The Wrestling World Reacts And Remembers." **Also Inside:** Candice Michelle, Mark Henry.

Vol. 19, 2008: Cover Story—*The Wrestler:* "Batista's Bombshell! If I Don't Beat The Undertaker, My Title Is Worthless!" 90-Minute Interview: Ted DiBiase. **Also Inside:** C.M. Punk, Cena vs. Jeff Hardy, Bryan Danielson. **Cover Story—*Inside Wrestling:*** "Jealousy Rages: Who Will Knock Out Karen Angle?" **Also Inside:** Rey Mysterio Jr., Turnbuckle Turkeys.

Vol. 20, 2008: Cover Story—*The Wrestler:* "Kennedy Hornswoggled! How The Son-Of-A-Vince Story Should Have Played Out." 90-Minute Interview: Tammy Sytch. **Also Inside:** Finlay, Super 8. **Cover Story—*Inside Wrestling:*** "Booker T(NA): I'm Pumped Up For The Second Half Of My Career!" **Also Inside:** Fabulous Moolah, Robert Roode, "Death Grip."

Vol. 21, 2008: Cover Story—*The Wrestler:* "Kurt Angle: The Best Wrestler On The Planet!" 90-Minute Interview: Nick Bockwinkel. **Also Inside:** John Cena, The Briscoes, **Cover Story—*Inside Wrestling:*** "WrestleMania 24: The Thrilling Highs And Ridiculous Lows." **Also Inside:** Motor City Machine Guns, ECW, Kaz.

Vol. 22, 2008: Cover Story—*The Wrestler:* "Samoa Joe To TNA: Get Serious Or Get Hurt!" 90-Minute Interview: Jim Cornette. **Also Inside:** Ric Flair, CHIKARA. **Cover Story—*Inside Wrestling:*** "WrestleMania 24: The *Real* Winners & Losers." **Also Inside:** Nigel McGuinness, Gail Kim.

Please send me **THE WRESTLER/INSIDE WRESTLING** combination issues I've checked below. I have enclosed a check or money order for $9.95 (plus $2 each for shipping and handling), payable to Sports & Entertainment Publications, LLC, for each issue I am ordering.

- [ ] Angle/Edge (Vol. 2, 2005)
- [ ] Hogan/WM 21 (Vol. 3, 2005)
- [ ] Angle/Christian (Vol. 5, 2006)
- [ ] Misterio/Sting (Vol. 7, 2006)
- [ ] Batista/ECW (Vol. 9, 2006)
- [ ] Sting/Stratus (Vol. 11, 2007)
- [ ] DX/WrestleMania (Vol. 13, 2007)
- [ ] WWE/Styles (Vol. 15, 2007)
- [ ] Melina/Smackdown (Vol. 17, 2007)
- [ ] Orton/Benoit (Vol. 18, 2007)
- [ ] Batista/Karen (Vol. 19, 2008)
- [ ] Kennedy/Booker (Vol. 20, 2008)
- [ ] Angle/'Mania 24 (Vol. 21, 2008)
- [ ] Joe/'Mania 24 (Vol. 22, 2008)

SEND TO:
Sports & Entertainment Publications LLC
Box 910
Ft. Washington, PA 19034

Please indicate method of payment:
☐ Check or money order
(enclosed and payable to Sports & Entertainment Publications LLC)
☐ VISA ☐ MasterCard
Card #_____
Expiration Date: ___/___ (MO/YR) ___ ___ ___ (3 DIGIT SECURITY CODE)

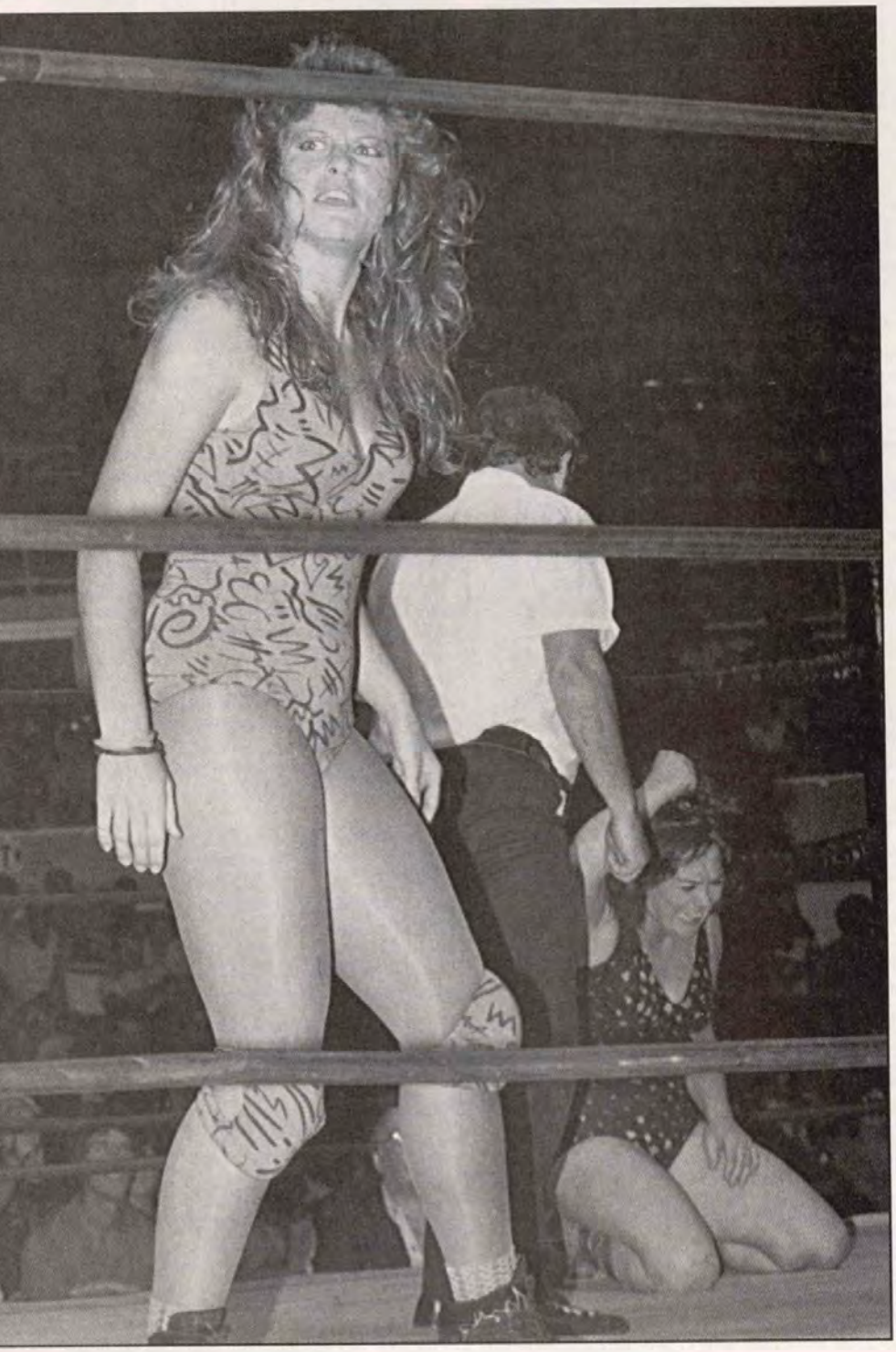
Signature: _____
NAME _____
ADDRESS _____ APT. ____
CITY _____ STATE ____ ZIP _____

FOR CANADIAN AND MEXICAN ORDERS, THE POSTAGE AND HANDLING CHARGE IS $3 PER ISSUE (AIRMAIL). FOR ALL OTHER COUNTRIES, THE POSTAGE AND HANDLING CHARGE IS $7.50 PER ISSUE (AIRMAIL). INT'L MONEY ORDER IN U.S. FUNDS ONLY. PLEASE ALLOW 6-8 WEEKS FOR DELIVERY.

7805

PWI classic

From the October 1985 issue of *Sports Review Wrestling*

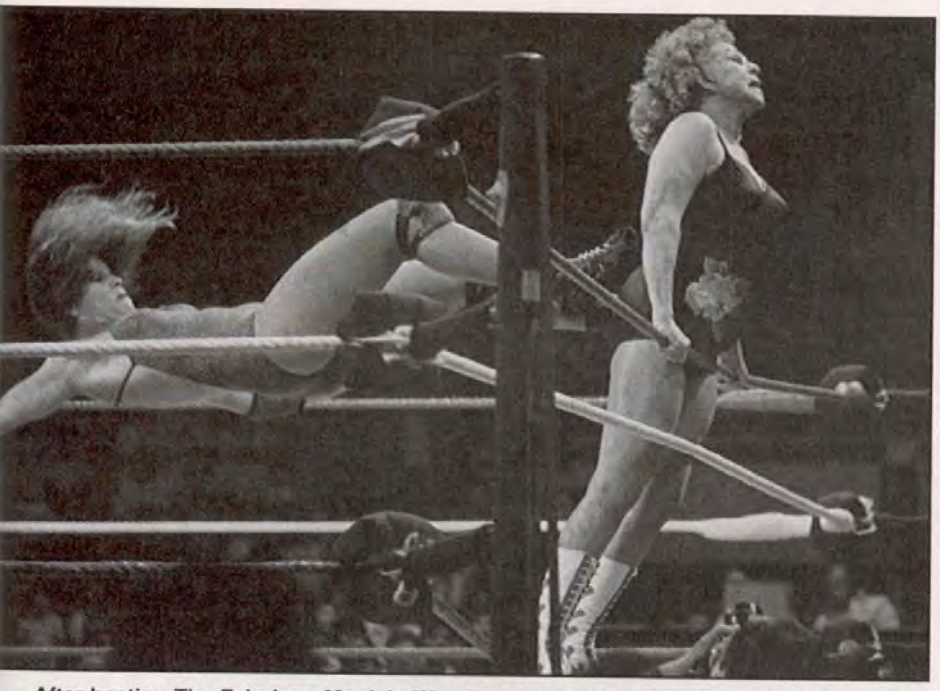


WENDI RICHTER: HOW SHE SAVED WOMEN'S WRESTLING

Served to the world on a platinum platter, her praises sung by a golden voice, Wendi Richter was able to revive the dying world of women's wrestling

IN 1949, AMERICA, flush from her victories overseas, embarked on a two-year era of complacency, highlighted by a baby boom, a furious exodus to the suburbs, and the acceptance of television as the grand arbiter of taste and policy-making in the home. In college football, Notre Dame was declared the national champion for the third time in four years and Slave Girl Moolah made her professional wrestling debut.

In 1956, our country's sense of invulnerability had diminished and a pervading sense of menace colored our lives. The fear of atomic war sent the thousands of suburbanites scurrying like rats to build hilarious underground appendages to their new homes. In baseball, the New York Yankees won the American League pennant, to continue a streak that would see them win 13 pennants in 15 seasons. In the middle of that year, Fabulous Moolah, her name changed to emphasize the obvious, defeated June Byers in Baltimore to become the World women's champion.



After beating The Fabulous Moolah, Wendi Richter rocketed to tremendous fame. She was often spotted cruising New York's hottest nightclubs. After Moolah, Richter had to find another opponent. She found Moolah's protégé Lelani Kai, who was more than up to the challenge.

Come 1967, the Boston Red Sox were American League champions and the University of Southern California sat high atop the college football heap. Our country, suffering from a festering wound called Vietnam, cried aloud as racial and domestic violence erupted in her cities. In June, Verne Gagne defeated Mad Dog Vachon for the AWA championship while Fabulous Moolah quietly celebrated her 12th anniversary as champion.

As our confidence was shaken from the effects of Watergate in 1975, Bjorn Borg won the first of his five consecutive Wimbeldon titles. 1975 also marked the end of UCLA's domination of college basketball, as the Bruins, who won the NCAA title for the 11th time in 13 years, would not win again. And, without pomp or circumstances, Fabulous Moolah acknowledged her 19th year as champion.

1980 began with Iran still playing host to 62 Americans, contributing to a national feeling of pessimism, and ended with a new President, a renewed sense of strength, and the release of the hostages. In hockey, the New York Islanders won the first of four consecutive Stanley Cups, and Fabulous Moolah marked her 24th year as champion.

Shortly after winning the title, Richter lost it to Kai, setting up one of the most anticipated women's matches in women's wrestling history. Drawing fans from around the globe, Kai and Richter battled at WrestleMania, where Richter would regain her title.

By 1984, women's wrestling possessed all the excitement and unpredictability of a one-horse race. Never in the history of competitive athletics had one person laid such rule to a sport. One would have to look to Hirohito, who celebrates his 60th anniversary as Emperor of Japan later next year, to discover a similar reign. Moolah had turned the once competitive and action-filled women's ranks into something resembling a California ghost town.

The paradox is that while Moolah had become synonymous with women's wrestling, her domination of the sport had all but destroyed it. She became a champion without challengers, as women refused to wrestle her. Her legend grew at the expense of competition. Like her fellow female icon Ma Bell, cries could be heard throughout the land to break up The Fabulous Moolah.

When Lou Albano and Cyndi Lauper began their much-documented feud back in the summer of 1984, women's wrestling, especially in the New York area, had reached its lowest point. Even a match between two exciting wrestlers like Peggy Patterson and Desiree Peterson failed to elicit any sort of crowd enthusiasm. Women were definitely out.

When the Albano-Lauper feud broke and it was announced that to resolve things Lauper would manage Wendi Richter against the Albano-guided Moolah, the response was more incredulous than anything else. Just the fact that Lauper was involved lent the match an instant star appeal. The feeling among wrestling fans was one of tolerant amusement. They were pleasantly surprised at all the publicity that the match aroused, but few, if any, felt that Richter had any chance in the ring.

Sports Review Wrestling ratings

October 1985

WWF

World Champion: Hulk Hogan

1. Tito Santana
2. Magnificent Muraco
3. Greg Valentine
4. Rick Steamboat
5. Paul Orndorff
6. Roddy Piper
7. Junkyard Dog
8. John Studd
9. Randy Savage
10. Jimmy Snuka

NWA

World Champion: Ric Flair

1. Magnum T.A.
2. Dusty Rhodes
3. Black Bart
4. Nikita Koloff
5. Gino Hernandez
6. Tully Blanchard
7. Iceman Parsons
8. Wahoo McDaniel
9. Kerry Von Erich
10. Terry Taylor

Tag Teams

1. The Road Warriors
2. Ivan & Nikita Koloff
3. Barry Windham & Mike Rotundo
4. Ted Dibiase & Steve Williams
5. Ole & Arn Anderson
6. Chris Adams & Gino Hernandez
7. Rick Rude & Jesse Barr
8. Dennis Condrey & Bobby Eaton
9. Nikolai Volkoff & Iron Sheik
10. Jonathan Boyd & Rip Morgan

Most Popular

1. Hulk Hogan
2. Magnum T.A.
3. Kerry Von Erich
4. Dusty Rhodes
5. Rick Martel
6. Sgt. Slaughter
7. Kevin Von Erich
8. Junkyard Dog
9. Wahoo McDaniel
10. Tito Santana

Most Hated

1. Chris Adams
2. Roddy Piper
3. Tully Blanchard
4. Nikita Koloff
5. Gino Hernandez
6. Ted Dibiase
7. Greg Valentine
8. Rick Rude
9. Kevin Sullivan
10. Magnificent Muraco

Known and feared for her aggression, Moolah reigned as women's champion for more than 27 years. Here she lays into Linda Carroll's scalp with a vicious tug of the hair. Moolah's ferocity invited frequent comparisons to her male counterparts.

Although Richter would never wrestle for the WWF after losing her title to Spider Lady, she left an indelible impression on the company and sport forever. Her championship reign and fiery persona opened the door for other female wrestlers and celebrities like Cyndi Lauper to achieve fame and fortune in the ring.

As the saying goes, the rest is history.

In front of a screaming, sellout crowd at Madison Square Garden last July, Richter announced to the world that women's wrestling was back for good, as she defeated Moolah and ended the Fabulous one's 27-year long title reign. Richter's victory immediately placed the women's tour back on the wrestling wire.

Richter became the hottest attraction in the country. Clad in Cyndi Lauper designer fashions and sporting the requisite pair of celebrity shades, Richter became a fixture at the trendiest New York clubs. She became the female equivalent of Hulk Hogan, spending half of her time on the talk-show circuit.

When Richter lost the title to Moolah's charge, Lelani Kai, in February, the public clamored for a rematch. So intense was the demand that many considered the Wendi Richter-Lelani Kai title match to be *the* main event a month later at WrestleMania. As millions looked on, Richter demonstrated her championship mettle and defeated Kai to regain the belt. Since then she has defended her title throughout the country, on a crusade to show the fans that women's wrestling is here to stay.

To say that Wendi Richter saved women's wrestling from oblivion might seem exaggerated, but there can be no doubt that it was dying a slow death. Now, facing the challenges of Lelani Kai, Judy Martin, IWF champion Misty Blue Simmes, and Fabulous Moolah, among others, Richter is heading a group of wrestlers that is long in depth and talent, and fueled by a fan support it hasn't enjoyed in many years. Certainly history will look upon Moolah as the greatest women's champion of all-time. But, as Moolah might have placed women on the map, it was up to Wendi Richter to civilize and develop the territory, which she has done beyond everyone's wildest dreams. □

Sports Review Wrestling, October 1985

The Cover: Rick Martel, beaten and bloodied, was handed a defeat at the hands of Michael Hayes, seemingly losing his AWA World title. A legal loophole circumvented the title change, however, and Hayes cried foul! For once, the Freebird may have been in the right.

On the road again: The Great American Bash was the stage for a rare instance in history when the AWA and NWA World tag team champions squared off in a title-unification match. Although the match pitting The Road Warriors against Ivan Koloff and Krusher Khruschev ended in a double-DQ, *Sports Review Wrestling* honored Hawk and Animal with its "Wrestler of the Month" honors for agreeing to meet their NWA counterparts within the NWA and for defending the honor of the United States.

A painful lesson for T.A.: Most experts and fans felt it was just a matter of time before Magnum T.A., with all his talent and charisma, would capture the NWA World championship. But Magnum was having a heck of a time beating Buddy Landell, and he knew darn well that he'd have no shot at beating "Nature Boy" Ric Flair until he could get the better of "Nature Boy" Landell.

A Savage unleashed: Upon leaving the Mid-Southern territory to make his WWF debut, "Macho Man" Randy Savage told *Sports Review Wrestling* only two things were on his mind: avoiding talk about his brother, "Leaping" Lanny Poffo, and getting a title shot at Hulk Hogan.

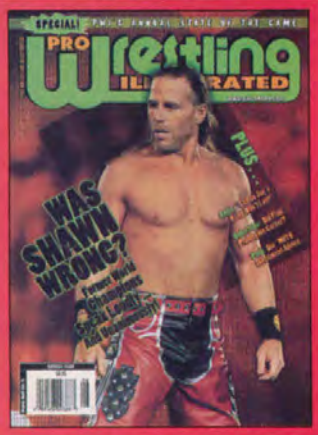
A peak inside Chris Adams' mind: When Bill Apter invited Chris Adams to peruse our vast photo archive, the former senior editor had a brilliant idea. Why not let Adams select a series of photos of some of the best in the business and write his own captions describing his thoughts? The result was one of the most unique pieces we ever ran.

between falls

PRO WRESTLING ILLUSTRATED welcomes readers' comments on any of our stories or columns.

Send letters to:
BETWEEN FALLS Box 1148, Ft. Washington, PA 19034
Or you can e-mail your comments to prowrestlingillustrated@yahoo.com

SHAWN WAS RIGHT



Coming out of WrestleMania 24, Shawn Michaels felt he'd complied with Ric Flair's wishes by wrestling his heart out in their Career-Threatening match. Flair felt the same way. But Batista, a close personal friend of Flair's, did not.

Batista felt HBK should have allowed Flair to win the match so that his career could continue.

"The Animal" initiated a feud with Michaels that led us to ask if Shawn did the right thing at 'Mania. For answers, we asked some former greats what they'd have done.

Each former champ told us he'd have done exactly what Michaels did. To throw a match—even out of respect for Flair—would have insulted him and his career.

Their verdict was unanimous: Anything less than Michaels' best effort would have been inappropriate for Flair's retirement bout.

"I was relieved to read that greats like Dusty Rhodes and Triple-H shared my opinion," wrote reader Elaine Rucker of Royersford, Pennsylvania. "They understood what Shawn had done for Flair. To me, that speaks volumes about them as competitors and as men."

DA MAN, PART TWO?

Maybe it's me, but while watching Matt Morgan compete on a recent episode of *Impact*, I could not help but notice just how similar he has become to the great Bill Goldberg.

From Morgan's ring entrance to his finishing maneuver (a jackhammer variation) to his mannerisms, it has become clear—at least to me—that TNA is trying to model Matt after a true phenom. Watching Morgan stomp around the ring and issue a challenge to Tomko on the ring mike brought me back to WCW of the late-'90s. It was such pure Goldberg, I half-expected Morgan to ask, "Who's next?"

While mildly entertaining, saddling a promising young stud like Morgan with Goldberg's gimmick is unfair to Matt and disrespectful to Goldberg. Goldberg was a once-in-a-lifetime talent who was in the right place at the right time. Sure, he was limited in the ring, but he had enough of an aura to buy WCW a few extra months in the Monday Night War. Expecting Morgan to reprise Goldberg's gifts will only lead to disappointment in TNA.

Morgan was already mismanaged in WWE; hopefully TNA won't make the same mistakes with him that WWE did.

JEFF SHAW
Marietta, GA

SAY IT AIN'T SO, JOE

I have always respected Samoa Joe, not just for his physical abilities, but also—and mainly—for the way he conducts himself as a leader in TNA.

But after his performance at Victory

Photo by Lee South/TNA Wrestling

Does this pose look familiar? It does to reader Jeff Shaw of Marietta, Georgia. He says he saw Bill Goldberg do the same thing in WCW a decade ago. Trying to relive the Goldberg phenomenon through Matt Morgan is a mistake by TNA, says Shaw.

Road, I must admit that the mere sight of Joe makes me want to change the channel on my TV. His behavior was deplorable. First, he turns his match against Booker T from a wrestling match into a mugging. Then he slaps Sharmell and attacks TNA security.

TNA doesn't need any more thugs like Robert Roode and James Storm who blindside opponents with weapons because things aren't going their way.

I hope Joe takes some time off to reflect on his behavior. I'm sure it disappointed more fans than just me. Maybe being champ is just too much pressure for Joe. Maybe he should consider giving up the strap. Whatever he does, I just hope he goes back to being a wrestler I can respect and enjoy.

ALEXIS BOURDAINE
New Orleans, LA

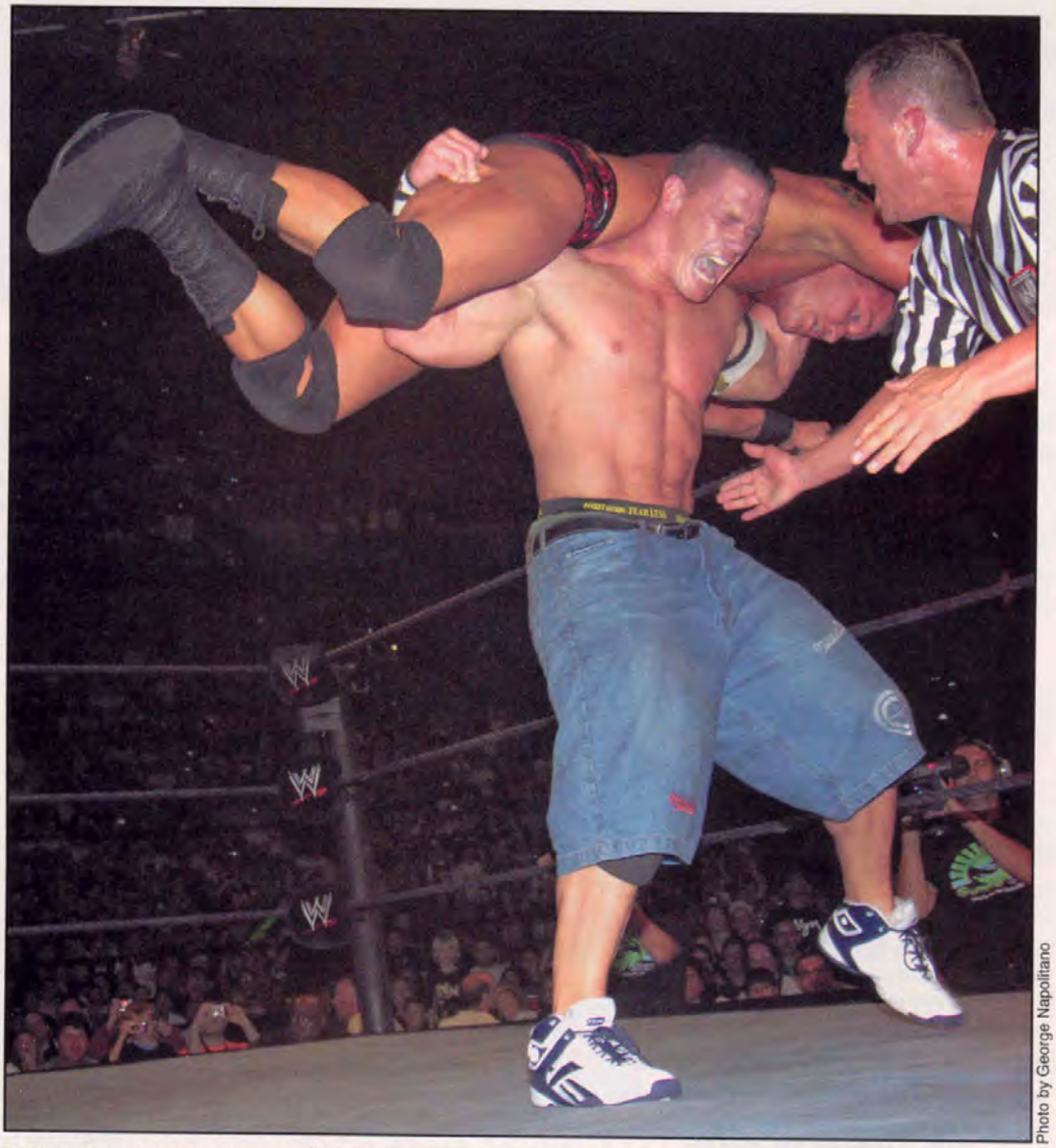


Photo by George Napolitano

Though he no longer wears a WWE title, reader Ashleigh Betteridge of Lawrenceville, New Jersey, still considers Cena to be the cream of the Raw crop.

SUBTRACTION BY ADDITION

Can somebody please explain to me what purpose Tony Atlas serves in ECW? On the surface, it seems as if he was brought in to help guide Mark Henry's career. I suppose we're now supposed to credit Atlas with Henry's ECW championship title reign at Night of Champions, which Henry won on his own anyway.

So far, the only thing Atlas has done for Henry is lure Colin Delaney into his camp. Big deal. Delaney is a non-factor and will always be. Henry would have handled Tommy Dreamer at The Great American Bash with ease.

So far, the sum contribution Atlas has made in WWE has been negligible. He adds nothing in the ring, and even less on the microphone. Then again, maybe he does add something on the stick. I can't tell because I can't understand a single thing he says. Maybe Vince and WWE can get their money's worth out of Atlas by letting him compete again. As a former Mr. USA, I'm sure he's still in relatively decent shape.

EDWARD FOSCO
Hartford, CT

THE CHAMP IS STILL HERE

I don't care if John Cena no longer wears the WWE World title, he's still the most exciting superstar on Raw in my eyes. Week in and week out, Cena's segments and matches are among the best on the show. Month after month, his matches are the highlight of WWE's pay-per-views. Whether he's injured or healthy, riding a winning streak, or going through a hard time, he consistently delivers an intense and compelling performance.

I may be in the minority, but nobody on the Raw roster even comes close to matching Cena. He's still "The Champ" to me, even without a championship belt around his waist.

ASHLEIGH BETTERIDGE
Lawrenceville, NJ □

PWI official ratings

For period ended August 15, 2008

TOP 10

1. **TRIPLE-H**
   269, Greenwich, CT
   (1) WWE heavyweight champion
2. **C.M. PUNK**
   210, Chicago, IL
   (3) WWE World champion
3. **SAMOA JOE**
   270, Samoa
   (2) TNA World champion
4. **NIGEL McGUINNESS**
   220, London, England
   (5) Ring of Honor champion
5. **BRENT ALBRIGHT**
   236, Tulsa, OK
   (-) NWA heavyweight champion
6. **MARK HENRY**
   380, Silsbee, TX
   (9) ECW heavyweight champion
7. **JOHN B. LAYFIELD**
   271, Roscoe, TX
   (-) No. 1 contender: WWE World title
8. **TAKESHI MORISHIMA**
   297, Tokyo, Japan
   (7) GHC champion
9. **KEIJI MUTO**
   245, Yaminishi, Japan
   (6) IWGP champion
10. **BOOKER T**
    250, Houston, TX
    (8) No. 1 contender: TNA World title

Booker T

TAG TEAMS

1. **TED DiBIASE JR. & CODY RHODES**
   Combined weight: 462 pounds
   (3)WWE World tag team champions
2. **JAMES STORM & ROBERT ROODE**
   Combined weight: 461 pounds
   (6) TNA World tag team champions
3. **HOMICIDE & HERNANDEZ**
   Combined weight: 515 pounds
   (1) No. 1 contenders: TNA World tag team title
4. **ZACK RYDER & CURT HAWKINS**
   Combined weight: 435 pounds
   (-) WWE tag team champions
5. **PHOENIX STAR & ZOKRE**
   Combined weight: 335 pounds
   (4) NWA tag team champions
6. **JIMMY JACOBS & TYLER BLACK**
   Combined weight: 379 pounds
   (5) Ring of Honor tag team champions
7. **EDDIE COLON & ERIC PEREZ**
   Combined weight: 441 pounds
   (-) FCW tag team champions
8. **TOGI MAKABE & TORU YANO**
   Combined weight: 488 pounds
   (8) IWGP tag team champions
9. **ALEX SHELLEY & CHRIS SABIN**
   Combined weight: 380 pounds
   (9) No. 2 contenders: TNA World tag team title
10. **TAIYO KEA & MINORU SUZUKI**
    Combined weight: 445 pounds
    (10) AJPW tag team champions

RAW

World Champion:
C. M. PUNK
(C) 210, Chicago, IL

1—**JOHN B. LAYFIELD** *(3) 271, Roscoe, TX*
2—**CHRIS JERICHO** *(6) 220, Winnipeg, Manitoba*
3—**BATISTA** *(1) 318, Washington, DC*
4—**KOFI KINGSTON** *(5) 225, Jamaica*
5—**JOHN CENA** *(2) 260, West Newberry, MA*
6—**KANE** *(4) 326, St. Louis, MO*
7—**LANCE CADE** *(10) 253, Omaha, NE*
8—**SANTINO MARELLA** *(9) 255, Calabria, Italy*
9—**JAMIE NOBLE** *(-)170, Hanover, WV*
10—**WILLIAM REGAL** *(-) 244, Blackpool, England*

SMACKDOWN

WWE Champion:
TRIPLE-H
(C) 269, Greenwich, CT

1—**EDGE** *(1) 240, Toronto, Ontario*
2—**THE GREAT KHALI** *(-) 420, Bombay, India*
3—**JEFF HARDY** *(5) 212, Cameron, NC*
4—**SHELTON BENJAMIN** *(8) 245, Minneapolis, MN*
5—**THE BIG SHOW** *(9) 465, Aiken, SC*
6—**MVP** *(3) 252, Miami, FL*
7—**KEN KENNEDY** *(4) 246, Green Bay, WI*
8—**VLADIMIR KOZLOV** *(7) 310, Moscow, Russia*
9—**STEVIE RICHARDS** *(-) 190, Philadelphia, PA*
10—**BRIAN KENDRICK** *(-) 175, Fairfax, VA*

ECW

Champion:
MARK HENRY
(C) 380, Silsbee, TX

1—**MATT HARDY** *(-) 213, Cameron, NC*
2—**FINLAY** *(1) 230, Belfast, Ireland*
3—**TOMMY DREAMER** *(4) 260, Yonkers, NY*
4—**BAM NEELY** *(-) 275 Robbinsdale, MN*
5—**CHAVO GUERRERO JR.** *(2) 210, El Paso, TX*
6—**RICKY ORTIZ** *(-) 246, Phoenix, AZ*
7—**EVAN BOURNE** *(-) 185, St. Louis, MO*
8—**ARMANDO ESTRADA** *(10) 230, La Habana, Cuba*
9—**BRADEN WALKER** *(-) 232, Fort Wright, KY*
10—**COLIN DELANY** *(8) 172, Rochester, NY*

TNA

World Champion:
SAMOA JOE
(C) 270, Samoa

1—**BOOKER T** *(1) 250, Houston, TX*
2—**A.J. STYLES** *(3) 202, Gainesville, FL*
3—**PETEY WILLIAMS** *(-) 235, Windsor, Ontario*
4—**KURT ANGLE** *(2) 233, Pittsburgh, PA*
5—**CONSEQUENCES CREED** *(-) 202, Columbus, GA*
6—**CHRISTIAN CAGE** *(6) 225, Toronto, Ontario*
7—**KEVIN NASH** *(-) 317, Detroit, MI*
8—**RHINO** *(8) 275, Detroit, MI*
9—**MATT MORGAN** *(-) 318, Fairfield, CT*
10—**JAY LETHAL** *(-) 190, Elizabeth, NJ*

Top 10 and Tag Team ratings are based on won-lost records for the past month, quality of opposition, and inherent skill of each wrestler or team. These ratings are compiled by the magazine's editorial board. All other ratings are based on the official current positions of challengers to the top title in each category; The number in parentheses indicates a wrestler's position in that category last issue; (–) indicates that the wrestler was not rated in that category last issue, while (C) indicates the wrestler was champion in that category last issue.

CHIKARA: Champion—Vin Gerard; **1**—Hallowicked; **2**—Delirious; **3**—Fire Ant; **4**—Claudio Castagnoli; **5**—Mike Quackenbush; **6**—Brodie Lee; **7**—Eddie Kingston; **8**—Lince Dorado 2; **9**—Tim Donst; **10**—Hydra.

COMPOUND PRO WRESTLING: Champion—Jesus Rodriguez; **1**—Justin Lee; **2**—Tim Rockwell; **3**—El Super Calibri; **4**—Canadian Red Devil; **5**—Draven Cross; **6**—Shane Morbid; **7**—Handsome Dutch; **8**—Brian Lakewood; **9**—Cast Iron Cothern; **10**—Tyson Armstrong.

COMBAT ZONE WRESTLING: Champion—Drake Younger; **1**—Devon Moore; **2**—Nick Gage; **3**—Brain Damage; **4**—Chuck Taylor; **5**—Pinkie Sanchez; **6**—Sabian; **7**—D.J. Hyde; **8**—Ruckus; **9**— Dylan Summers; **10**—Danny Havoc.

EAST COAST WRESTLING ASSOCIATION: Champion—Frederick of Hollywood; **1**—Chase Del Monte; **2**—Freak Nastty; **3**—Ace Darling; **4**—Glen Osbourne; **5**—Bryan Logan; **6**—Prince Nana; **7**—Matt Logan; **8**—Mr. Scott Wright; **9**—MEGA; **10**—J.J. Crew Guy.

IMPACT ZONE WRESTLING: Champion—G.Q. Gallo; **1**—602 Wrecking Crew; **2**—Hawaiian Lion; **3**—Dean Radford; **4**—Ryan Lynch; **5**—Sergio Vega; **6**—Jay Garland; **7**—Dread Pirate; **8**—Tony Trouser; **9**—Mike G; **10**—Jack Bull.

INDIE PRO ENTERTAINMENT: Champion—Flex Fenom; **1**—OGB; **2**—Jake Davis; **3**—Gutterboy; **4**—Leslie Leatherman; **5**—Hyjinx; **6**—Chris Cline; **7**—John Balsamo; **8**—Fumar; **9**—Robbie Paige; **10**—U-Gene Dinsmore.

INDEPENDENT WRESTLING FEDERATION: Champion—Kevin Knight; **1**—Chris Steeler; **2**—Franciz; **3**—Biggie Biggs; **4**—Tony Torres; **5**—Damian Adams; **6**—Travis Blake; **7**—Justin Corino; **8**—Vik Voorhees; **9**—Frank Scoleri; **10**—Mike Jenkins.

NATIONAL INDEPENDENT CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING: Champion—Ken Steel; **1**—Sgt. Jim Nelson; **2**—Masked Superstar; **3**—Eclipso; **4**—Darius Mackleford; **5**—Damien James; **6**—Scott Lee; **7**—Ace Englund; **8**—Dustin Daniels; **9**—Wyld Chyld; **10**—Hillbilly Helbert.

PRO WRESTLING ENTERTAINMENT: Champion—Vacant; **1**—Shane Valentine; **2**—Jey Graham; **3**—Age; **4**—Glen Osbourne; **5**—Johnny Graham; **6**—Shane Shadows; **7**—Coach Boden; **8**—John Balsamo; **9**—Ian Jordan; **10**—Jackpot.

TEXAS ALL-STAR WRESTLING: Champion—Anthony Stevens; **1**—Nick Daniels; **2**—ZenZen; **3**—Scoby Gober; **4**—Neico; **5**—Dylan Starr; **6**—Chip Dumas; **7**—Dark Star; **8**—Alex Evans; **9**—Spider Boy; **10**—Nate Slater.

WORLD CLASS EXTREME WRESTLING: Champion—Corey Edsel; **1**—Bobby Wohlfert; **2**—Cletus Bass; **3**—K.C. McKnight; **4**—Tracy Gilbert; **5**—Hangtime; **6**—Dillinger; **7**—Shaq Knox; **8**—Aaron Devil; **9**—Kid Evil; **10**—Cory Duncum.

WORLD REVOLUTIONS ENTERTAINMENT: Champion—John Deaton; **1**—Mike Valentine; **2**—Tiger Kid; **3**—Johnny Ramirez; **4**—Randy the Rodeo Clown; **5**—Brandon Groom; **6**—David Cox; **7**—Summer Rain; **8**—Alexandra Guerrero Hernandez; **9**—Johnny Harper; **10**—Joshua La Rue.

RING OF HONOR

Champion:
NIGEL McGUINNESS
(C) 220, London, England

1—ERICK STEVENS
(4) 231, Sarasota, FL
2—BRYAN DANIELSON
(8) 185, Aberdeen, WA
3—KEVIN STEEN
(–) 220, Marieville, Quebec
4—CLAUDIO CASTAGNOLI
(2) 232, Schaffhausen, Switz.
5—TYLER BLACK
(6) 210, Davenport, IA
6—CHRIS HERO
(7) 240, Dayton, OH
7—RODERICK STRONG
(9) 212, Tampa, FL
8—AUSTIN AIRES
(10) 202, Milwaukee, WI
9—NECRO BUTCHER
(5) 230, Morgantown, WV
10—JIMMY JACOBS
(–) 173, Grand Rapids, MI

NWA

Champion:
BRENT ALBRIGHT
(1) 236, Tulsa, OK

1—ADAM PEARCE
(C) 248, Chicago, IL
2—MIKE DIBIASE
(6) 220, Amarillo, TX
3—BLUE DEMON JR.
(3) 228, Mexico City, Mexico
4—SHINSUKE NAKAMURA
(2) 248, Kyoto, Japan
5—PEPPER PARKS
(9) 230, Buffalo, NY
6—RICKY VEGA
(10) 234, New York, NY
7—SEAN WALTMAN
(8) 212, Minneapolis, MN
8—SAL RINAURO
(–) 185, Hollywood, CA
9—ADRIAN HAWKINS
(–) 180, Little Five Points, GA
10—ROB CONWAY
(7) 238, New Albany, IN

JAPAN

1—MASATO TANAKA
(–) 216, Wakayama, Japan
2—TOGI MAKABE
(–) 243, Sagamihara, Japan
3—SHINSUKE NAKAMURA
(–) 245, Kyoto, Japan
4—KEIJI MUTO
(–) 243, Yamanashi, Japan
IWGP champion
5—TAKESHI MORISHIMA
(3) 297, Tokyo, Japan
GHC champion
6—NAOMICHI MARUFUJI
(6) 200, Saitama, Japan
7—TAIYO KEA
(–) 234, Honolulu, Hawaii
8—SATOSHI KOJIMA
(–) 247, Tokyo, Japan
9—MINORU SUZUKI
(–) 225, Yokohama, Japan
10—KENTA
(–) 180, Saitama, Japan

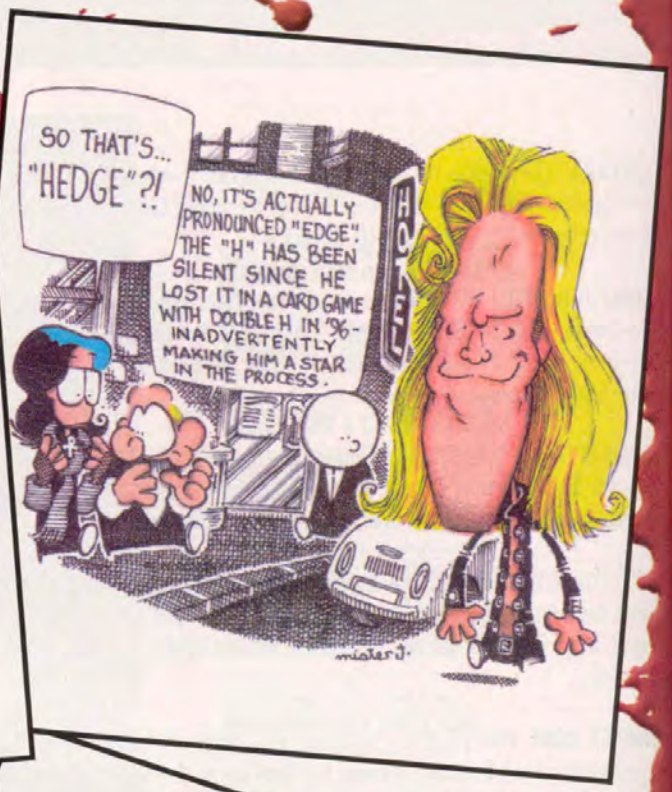
MEXICO

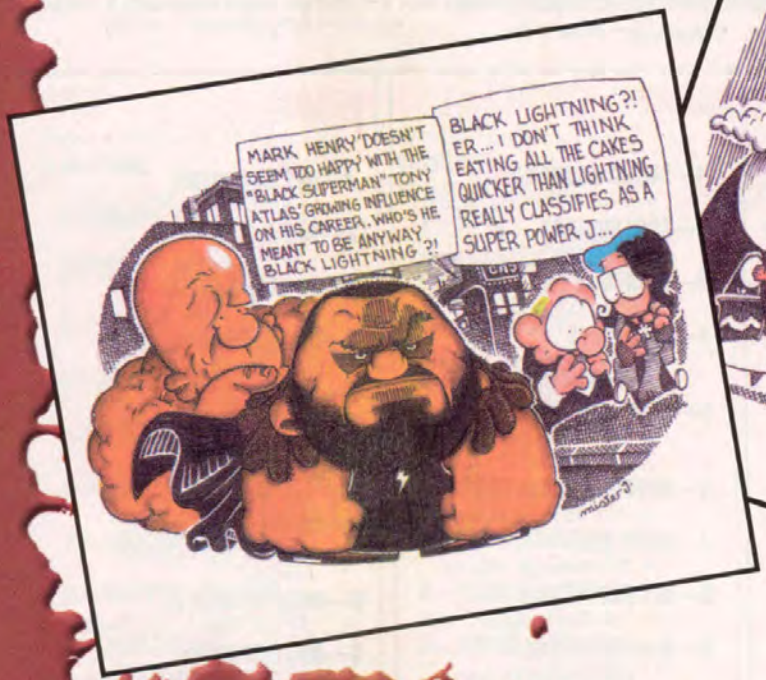
1—REY BUCANERO
(2) 207, Mexico City, Mexico
2—VILLANO V
(–) 215, Mexico City, Mexico
3—SANGRE AZTECA
(–) 185, Todas, Mexico
4—ROCKY ROMERO
(–) 175, Havana, Cuba
5—AVERNO
(–) 170, Ciudad de Mexico, Distrito Federal
6—ALEX KOSLOV
(6) 190, Moscow, Russia
7—ULTIMO GUERRERO
(–) 210, Gomez Palacio, Mexico
8—DRAGON ROJO JR.
(–) 180, Mexico City, Mexico
9—DOS CARAS JR.
(–) 210, San Luis Potosi, Mexico
10—DAMIÁN 666
(–) 195, Tijuana, Mexico

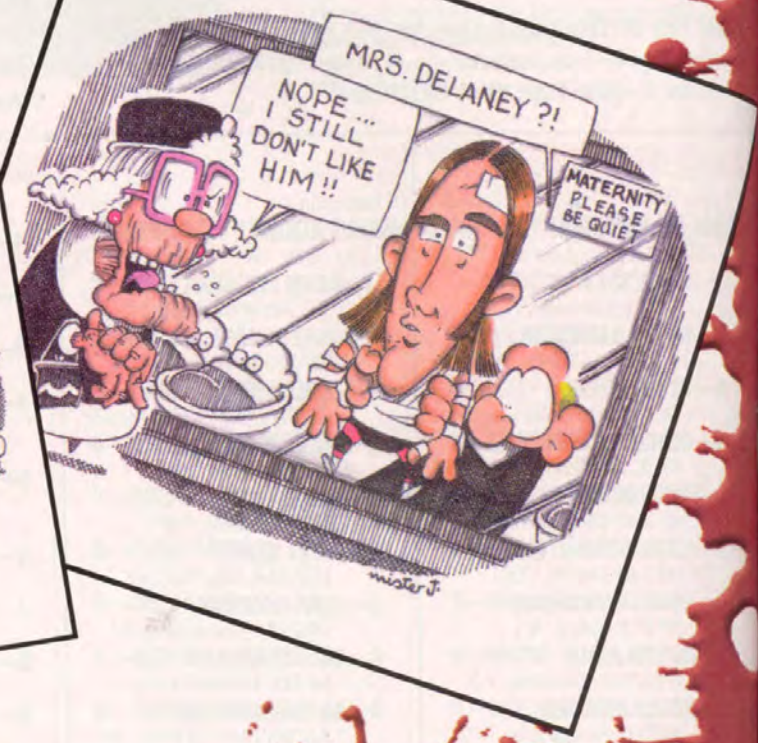
Drawing Blood

By Jason Conlan

ANOTHER BRAINSTORM FROM TNA MANAGEMENT?
YEAH, SCOTT STEINER WASN'T "WORKING" FOR THEM AS IS... SO...
DON'T TELL ME..
YOU GOT IT... MEET BIG POPPA SMURF!
mister J.


SO THAT'S... "HEDGE"?!
NO, IT'S ACTUALLY PRONOUNCED "EDGE". THE "H" HAS BEEN SILENT SINCE HE LOST IT IN A CARD GAME WITH DOUBLE H IN '96 - INADVERTENTLY MAKING HIM A STAR IN THE PROCESS.
mister J.


MARK HENRY DOESN'T SEEM TOO HAPPY WITH THE "BLACK SUPERMAN" TONY ATLAS' GROWING INFLUENCE ON HIS CAREER. WHO'S HE MEANT TO BE ANYWAY, BLACK LIGHTNING?!
BLACK LIGHTNING?! ER... I DON'T THINK EATING ALL THE CAKES QUICKER THAN LIGHTNING REALLY CLASSIFIES AS A SUPER POWER J...
mister J.



PRO Wrestling® ILLUSTRATED

HOTLINE

Hosted by Kevin McElvaney

When it comes to wrestling, *Pro Wrestling Illustrated* magazine has all the inside information you want and it's only a phone call away. If it happens in the ring, the locker room, or on the road, you'll hear it here first. To get all the breaking stories from every federation, call the *Pro Wrestling Illustrated* Hotline now and you'll be the first to learn about...

- >> Exclusive news from behind the scenes
- >> Upcoming events
- >> Up-to-date results from around the world
- >> Title changes and transactions
- >> Pay-per-view reports
- >> Wrestler of the week
- >> Weekly ratings

PLUS... Tell the editors of *Pro Wrestling Illustrated* what you want to see in the magazine. Dictate a letter to the Editor-in-Chief. Selected letters will be printed in *Pro Wrestling Illustrated*.

UPDATED EVERY TUESDAY AND FRIDAY AND AFTER PAY-PER-VIEW EVENTS

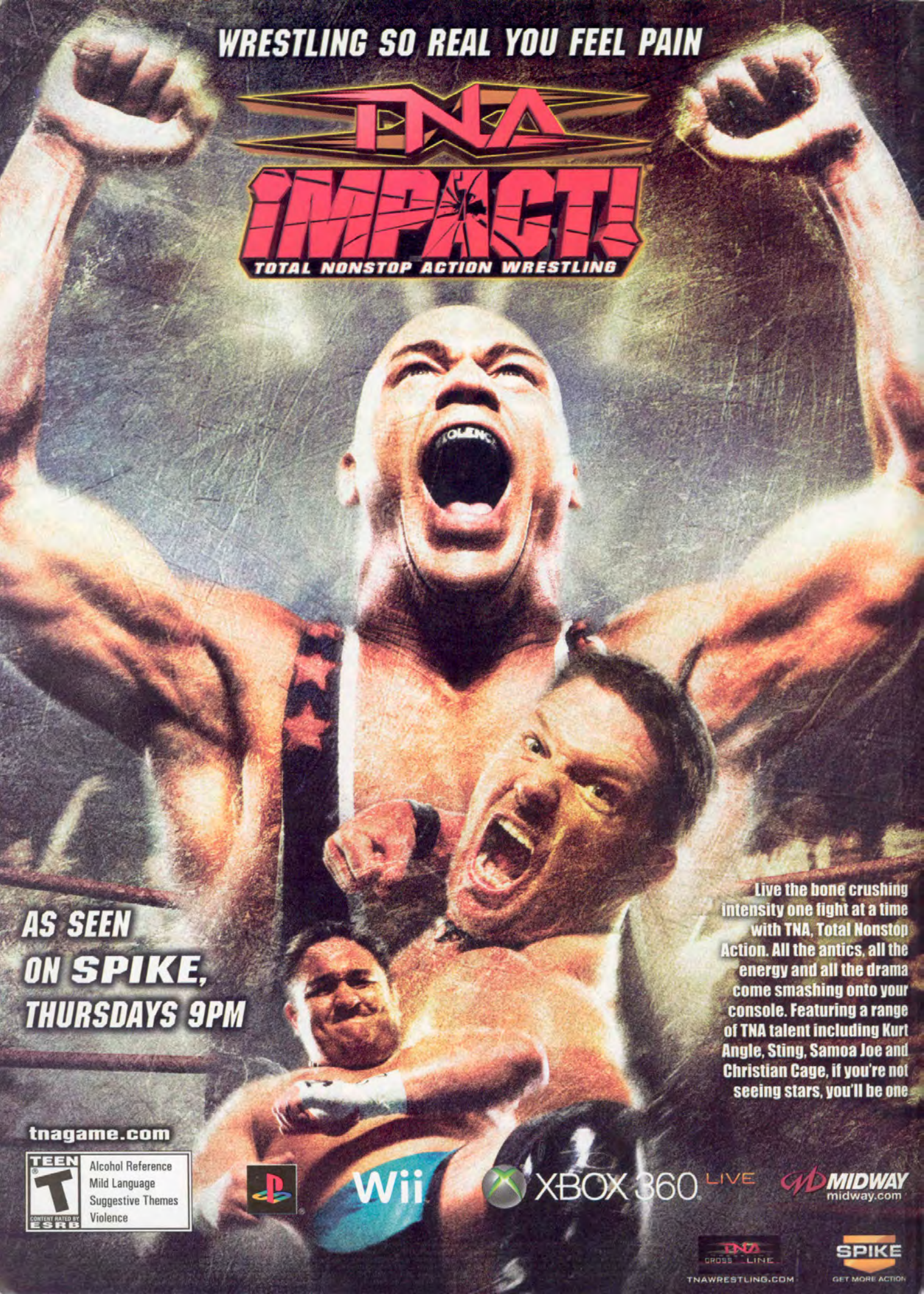
call now!

1-900-226-4PWI

☎ This service is available on both touch-tone and rotary-dial phones.

*Cost per minute in the United States is $1.99. Kids, get your parents' permission.

5913/08-06


WRESTLING SO REAL YOU FEEL PAIN
TNA
iMPACT!
TOTAL NONSTOP ACTION WRESTLING
AS SEEN ON SPIKE, THURSDAYS 9PM
Live the bone crushing intensity one fight at a time with TNA, Total Nonstop Action. All the antics, all the energy and all the drama come smashing onto your console. Featuring a range of TNA talent including Kurt Angle, Sting, Samoa Joe and Christian Cage, if you're not seeing stars, you'll be one
tnagame.com
TEEN T
Alcohol Reference
Mild Language
Suggestive Themes
Violence
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Wii
XBOX 360 LIVE
MIDWAY
midway.com
TNA GROSS LINE
TNAWRESTLING.COM
SPIKE
GET MORE ACTION